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**POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION: THE CASE OF ASPIRANT
STATES**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

WAIS MEHRABI
B.A., Berea College, 2015

2018
Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

December 05, 2018

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Wais Mehrabi ENTITLED Politics of International Recognition: The Case of Aspirant States BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

Vaughn Shannon, Ph.D.
Thesis Director

Laura M. Luehrmann, Ph.D.
Director, Master of Arts Program in
International and Comparative Politics

Committee on Final Examination:

Vaughn Shannon, Ph.D.
School of Public and International Affairs

Liam Anderson Ph.D.
School of Public and International Affairs

Carlos Costa, Ph.D.
School of Public and International Affairs

Barry Milligan, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

Mehrabi, Wais. M.A., International and Comparative Politics Graduate Program, School of Public and International Affairs, Wright State University, **2018.**

Politics of International Recognition: The Case of Aspirant States

Separatist polities that have managed to break away from their parent states and meet the basic criteria for statehood seek other states' formal recognition to achieve full statehood and membership of the international society. There is no established pattern to explain external recognition of statehood empirically and theoretically. Kosovo declared independence and attained widespread recognition while Somaliland, despite successful separation from Somalia, has not. What factors explain states' recognition decisions, or the selective conferring of recognition? The existing literature indicates that national interests, domestic politics, systematic level factors, international legal and normative standards, regime type, and identity politics shape recognition decisions. This thesis attempted to enhance the literature by focusing on less-explored factors through a Large-N cross-national quantitative analysis of ten cases. This study argues that when all other potential explanations are constant or absent, susceptibility of states to domestic separatism, regime type, and religious affinities influence states' recognition decisions.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explain what factors motivate states to extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. An aspirant state is an unrecognized or partially recognized recognition-seeking separatist polity that has managed to break away from its parent state and meets the Montevideo Convention criteria for statehood – (1) a permanent population; (2) a defined territory; (3) a government; and (4) capacity to enter into relations with the other states – which aspires to become a sovereign independent state and be admitted to the international community. Aspirant states come into existence often as a result of civil wars and ethnic conflicts. The mainstream conflict resolution approaches which rely on power-sharing arrangements that result in shared sovereignty or some form of federal solution between the parent state and subunits have worked in some cases, Belgium and Spain, but proved less effective in others such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Eurasian separatist entities (Berg, 2007; Bindebir et al., 2003; Roper, 2004).

While a number of separatist entities, Iraqi Kurdish separatists for example, have reached a temporary settlement through a power-sharing scheme or ethno-federalism arrangement, others have failed. In cases of failed federalization plans, power-sharing arrangements, or unification with parent or a different third state, the separatist entities have persisted in their aspiration for statehood, leaving them as *de facto states* who no longer wish to become part of their parent states (Berg, 2007; Diez, 2000; Bahcheli et.al., 2004; Keane 2002; Pegg, 1998). These entities are not temporary anomalies but rather have become permanent features of the international system without achieving international recognition despite fulfilling the basic criteria for

statehood. Their unrecognized status results in their international isolation and subjection to excessive intervention by a major patron state.

If separatist movements fulfill the basic requirements for statehood, why are they not admitted to the international society as sovereign states? What causes states to deny or grant these entities the pathway to full statehood and membership in the United Nations? Why have some of these entities received partial recognition while others remain unrecognized? This thesis tackles these questions through a Large-N cross-national quantitative analysis of ten cases of aspirant states. This study postulates that vulnerability of states to domestic separatism, competitive democratization between the parent and aspirant state, and religious affinities influence states' recognition decisions.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The background subsection provides a brief introduction to aspirant states and their position in the international system. The statement of the problem explores the need for research on international recognition of aspirant states. The research question section elaborates on the research questions guiding this thesis. The subsection on significance of study provides a rationale of the importance of this study and its potential contribution to the literature. Lastly, organization of the thesis outlines the structure of the thesis and distribution of chapters.

Background

Sovereign and recognized states are considered the most powerful principal actors in the international system and politics. Presently, there are 193 states with often disputed but fairly stable borders (Members-UN). However, they are not the sole units in the international system. Political authority, in practice, has been divided among both state and non-state actors. The

constellation of non-state actors is numerous. For example, International Government Organizations (IGOs) like United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Amnesty International and Red Cross, and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) like Wal-Mart.

The study of international relations has traditionally focused on states and other major non-state actors. However, non-state actors, such as Somaliland, which displays accoutrements of statehood except for international legal status, membership in the United Nations, and full or widespread international recognition (Florea, 2014), have received comparatively less attention. These entities that “exist in an unrecognized or partially recognized limbo, neither a full part of the international system, nor an ungoverned space” (Thomas, 2014, p.1), are important for understanding global politics. Though separatist entities fulfilling basic state functions with partial or no international recognition have existed at various times during the twentieth century, their number increased following WWII. Over 34 secessionist entities meeting the basic requirements of statehood except international recognition existed between 1945 and 2011 (Florea, 2014, p.792). An assessment of literature shows the precise definition and terminology describing non-state separatist entities is ambiguous. There are many terms used to define such entities, for example unrecognized states (Caspersen, 2012), state-like entities (King, 2001), states-within-states (Spears, 2004), quasi-states (Kolstø, 2006), pseudo-states (Kolossoff and O’Loughlin, 1999), contested states (Geldenhuis, 2009), aspirant, separatist, secessionist, and informal states (Coggins, 2014; Isachenko, 2012). These entities further proliferated in the post-Cold War era following dissolution of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Socialist Federal Republics of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Achievement of full statehood and admission to the international society for these entities has varied. Some entities—Slovenia, Croatia, and the former Soviet Baltic states, for example—went through an expedited process of widespread recognition and admission to the UN, while Somaliland, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus, and Abkhazia remain unrecognized or partially recognized.

The primary distinction between success and failure in attaining full statehood and international legal status for these entities is recognition by existing sovereign states, which affirms their external legitimacy, admission to the international society, and subsequent membership as sovereign states in the UN. Coggins asserts that “statehood does not inhere in governmental control on the ground alone. Without external legitimacy, an actor is not a state” (2014, p. 8). Recognition confers an international legal status to these entities, because only when a “new state has been recognized does it become a subject of international law, and this initially only with respect to the existing states recognizing it” (Hillgruber, 1998, p.492). Thus, international recognition is an essential step for these nascent states to achieve full statehood and inclusion in the international society.

Statement of the Problem

While most scholars focused on the internal dynamics of aspirant states and generated invaluable scholarly understanding about the creation, evolution, development, and impact of these entities (Pegg,2017), an assessment of the literature shows a severe dearth of scholarship focusing primarily on international recognition of these entities. The existing research has focused on internal dynamics of aspirant states, especially state- and nation-building processes, as well as democratization and development of political and economic institutions. Though a

lack of international recognition causes unique problems for aspirant states undertaking state- and nation-building initiatives, nonetheless they have continued their efforts persistently, achieving variegated degrees of success.

Several scholars have extensively researched these topics. For instance, Kolstø argues that aspirant states created following military successes in civil wars focus on memories of suffering and military glories as such events “increase the possibility of exploiting war memories for nation-building purposes” (Kolstø, 2006, p. 730). These past experiences are effective tools in constructing a shared identity through “education, propaganda, ideology, and state symbols” (Pegg, 2017, p.5). Many aspirant states “play up the wartime experience, praising martyrs and building memorials” (Byman and King, 2012, p. 48). These themes are explored in other scholarly works on nation-building processes among aspirant states like King, (2001), Lynch, (2002), and Richards & Smith, (2015). Ethnic homogenization, usually following mass population displacement during civil and secessionist wars, is another constituent element of nation-building among some aspirant states. This element is used by Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Northern Cyprus, and others for their nation-building processes (O’Loughlin et al., 2013; O’Loughlin et al., 2011; Ó Beacháin, 2012; Pegg and Kolstø, 2015).

The scholarship is also rich on state-building among aspirant states. The lack of international recognition serves as a substantial impetus among some aspirant states to aggressively engage in effective state-building both to safeguard their claimed territory and increase their chances of international recognition (Kolstø and Blakkisrud, 2008; Pegg, 2017). Caspersen (2012, p.105) maintains that recognition offers “a powerful incentive for building an effective entity; an entity which can defend itself and which is deemed internationally acceptable”. Other scholars also have focused on state-building among aspirant states as

incentive to gain international recognition and increase their existence through fortifying political and military institutions necessary for stable statehood (Bakke et al., 2014; Berg and Mölder, 2012; Lynch, 2002; Ó Beacháin et al., 2016).

Several scholars have explored institutional building and democratization among aspirant states. Though external legitimacy and full sovereignty is an essential component for democratization and political development, Tansy (2001) has provided a theoretical demonstration that democratization is possible without external sovereignty and international recognition. Other scholars also maintain that a number of aspirant states have engaged in democratization to legitimize their existence and as a strategy of “earned sovereignty” (Broers, 2013; Caspersen, 2008, 2011; Scharf, 2003; Richards, 2014; Ryngaert and Sobrie 2011; Voller, 2013) to increase their chances of recognition.

The literature on international recognition of aspirant states is limited and often case specific. There are few systematic works directly focusing empirically and theoretically on recognition of aspirant states. Coggins (2011, 2014), in her study of recognition of aspirant states, focused on the role of great powers. Crawford (1995, 1996) studied the unilateral recognition of former USSR states. Mirilovic and Siroky (2014, 2015) studied the connection between religion and international recognition in the case of Palestine and Kosovo. Ozpek (2014) studied the relationship between recognition and regime type. His study, like Coggins’, focused only on great powers in the international system. In sum, the literature on recognition of aspirant states has two gaps and weaknesses. First, the existing scholarship is case specific or limited to a select number of recognizers, the great powers for example. Second, scholars have focused on classic power-politics explanations grounded in national interests and the realist tradition of International Relations (IR). Other major variables are under-researched. This study will fill the

gap in the literature by expanding on potential factors which shape recognition decisions. This research covers all UN member states in order to establish an in-depth understanding of recognition, which can yield consequential results for establishment of a general pattern of behavior among states and their recognition decisions.

Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and evaluate the factors, motivations, and reasons behind states' recognition decisions. The primary research question guiding this thesis is: what factors explain recognition of aspirant states by the existing member states of the international community? An assessment of the literature shows that the potential factors behind states' recognition decisions are diverse. The explanations that emerge repeatedly include international law and normative explanations, system level explanations, domestic and national politics of the states, the role of home or parent states, the regime type of the states, and identity politics. An initial speculative answer for the research question is that three variables are essential factors in influencing states' decisions to extend or withhold recognition to a (new) state; vulnerability of states to domestic separatism, regime type of the recognizer states, and religious affinities between states. This research will evaluate the effectiveness of these broad groups of factors on recognition through a Large-N quantitative analysis research design to establish general patterns in foreign policy decisions and recognition of aspirant states among both major powers and smaller states.

Another gap in the literature is “prolonged terminological and definitional battles that have done comparatively little to advance scholarly understanding” about these entities (Peg, 2017, p.3). This research will address the proliferation of different terms and definitional

disputes and propose a parsimonious definition and term that encompasses all the necessary components of these entities.

Significance of Study

Aspirant states have become permanent features of the international system. Their existence is a challenge to the fundamental assumptions about sovereignty of states. As such, recognition of these entities is important both for sustainability and democratic development of these nascent states and equally consequential for the existing states in the system. There are several major significances of this study.

First, the literature on international recognition of (new) states is limited and case specific. This research will contribute to the literature by evaluating the existing explanations and expanding their application to all UN member states in order to establish their validity and generalizability. International recognition is a less explored and under-theorized area of IR. This research will incorporate new explanations and variables to fill the gap in the literature by identifying factors that motivate states to extend or withhold recognition and establishing a general pattern for states' policy towards aspirant states.

Second, the quest for recognition is a significant incentive for aspirant states undertaking effective nation- and state-building, development of political and economic institutions, and democratization (Richards and Smith, 2015). Nonrecognition can potentially reverse these achievements for aspirant states. These improvements are essential especially for entities, such as black spots, which do not fit the criteria for aspirant states and whose future potentially depends on treatment of aspirant states. Stainslawski (2008) maintains that nonrecognition can reverse aspirant states to "black spots" which "represent territories in which and from which both

transnational organized crime (TOC) and terrorism operate, often becoming criminal-terrorist entities” (Stanislawski, 2008; p. 360-367). A lack of recognition can threaten the democratization process among aspirant states. As Caspersen notes these entities “often run out of steam and find themselves in a seemingly perpetual transition; they make steps towards democratization but reach a plateau fairly early on and may even experience democratic setbacks” (2012, p.98).

Though aspirant states have made considerable progress in fortifying their statehood despite a lack of international recognition, they are prone to disintegration, economic depression, and international isolation, which makes them more dependent on a patron state for support and survival. International law and customary practice in international politics dictates that “only recognized states may make treaties with other states, military, economic or otherwise” (Coggins, 2008.p.13). Members of the international community, with few exceptions, have generally responded to these entities in “three main ways: actively opposing them through the use of embargoes and sanctions; generally ignoring them; and coming to some sort of limited acceptance of their presence” (Pegg,1998, p. 177). These approaches have proven to be unsustainable and ineffective, especially in the case of Eurasian aspirant states where Russia has acted as a patron state expanding its influence. Even in cases where a strong a patron state is absent, some aspirant states have become hubs for organized crimes, human trafficking, and illegal international trade (Caspersen, 2008; Hoch, 2001; Lynch, 2002).

Third, another direct result of nonrecognition for aspirant states is their uneven distribution of resources. Aspirant states allocate a major portion of their budget for military and security while limiting funds for education and health services. For instance, Somaliland spent on average 51.1% of its entire government budget on security services from 2002 to 2011. In 2011, Somaliland spent US\$42.2 million on security, compared to \$5.9 million on education and

\$2.9 million on health (Pegg, 2017, p.7). Bradbury (2008) also emphasizes that security and defense are a priority for aspirant states because they fear the parent states.

The analysis reveals the importance of recognition both for aspirant states and existing members of the international community. This study will examine recognition by all the existing UN member states of ten entities that meet the working definition established for this research.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one consists of a brief introduction and background information on aspirant states, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, and organization of the thesis. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature, divided into subsections based on major themes—*Definitions and Terminology* addresses definitional ambiguities and concludes with a working definition; *International Recognition* reviews various approaches to recognition and arrives at a working definition; *Recognition Decisions: Factors and Motivations* evaluates major explanations and motivations for international recognition; *Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses* links the hypotheses derived from the literature review with the existing theories of IR. Chapter three outlines the research design and methods and operationalization of variables. Chapter four reports results of the empirical analysis followed by a discussion of results. Chapter five entails conclusion and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of existing research about recognition of aspirant states. Many explanations have been proposed to elucidate what motivates states to extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. Although the literature covers a variety of explanations for recognition, this review will focus on major explanations that emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. This chapter is divided into subsections that proceed as follows.

Definition and Terminology addresses the definitional ambiguity of terms used to refer to non-state separatist entities and ends with a working definition. *International Recognition* reviews different approaches to recognition and arrives at a working definition used for this research.

Recognition Decisions: Factors and Motivations reviews and evaluates major explanations and motivations for international recognition. The explanations are critically evaluated, synthesized, and placed into the context of this research. The subsection is followed by an overall conclusion of the major explanations reviewed. The last subsection, *Theoretical Framework and*

Hypotheses, links the hypotheses derived from the literature review with the existing theories of IR.

Definition and Terminology

Sovereign and recognized states remain the primary and central actors in international politics. There are 193 states with often disputed but fairly stable borders. However, they are not the sole units in the international system. Political authority, in practice, has been divided among

both state and non-state actors. One type of non-state actor is the de facto state – a separatist polity, such as Somaliland, which displays accoutrements of statehood except for international legal status, membership in the United Nations, and full or widespread international recognition (Florea, 2014).

The precise definition and appropriate terminology used to describe non-state separatist entities is ambiguous in the literature. There is a lack of consensus among scholars over precise definition of these “secessionist entities that control territory, provide governance, receive popular support, persist over time, and seek widespread recognition of their proclaimed sovereignty and yet fail to receive it” (Pegg; 2017, p.1). Pegg (1998, p. 26) defined these non-state actors as “de facto states” that is an “organized political leadership which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability”. Pegg (1998) further elaborates that these entities are capable of exercising legislative, executive, and judicial powers over their territories and populations, but lack international recognition, or are recognized by a limited number of states. Based on Pegg’s criteria, there are currently eight entities considered de facto states: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Northern Cyprus, Taiwan, Western Sahara, and Somaliland (Kolsto, 2006; Caspersen, 2008b; Berg and Toomla, 2009). Florea (2014) reports the existence of 34 of such entities between 1945 and 2011. Florea (2014) considers an entity a de facto state if:

It belongs to (or administrated by) a recognized country, but is not a colonial possession.
Seeks some degree of separation from that country and has declared independence (or has demonstrated aspirations for independence, for example, through a referendum or a ‘sovereignty declaration’). Exerts military control over a territory or portions of territory inhabited by a permanent population. It is not sanctioned by the government. Performs at

least basic governance functions (provision of social and political order). Lacks international legal sovereignty. And exists for at least 24 months. (p. 791-792)

Kolossov and O'Loughlin (1999) and Kolossov (2001) use the term “pseudo-state” to describe separatist entities capable of exercising monopoly over the use of violence in a defined territory that lack universal recognition. Pseudo states, they prescribe, despite having declared independence and fulfilling empirical criteria of statehood, are “islands of transitional” or “incomplete statehood” with low levels or absence of international recognition (Kolossov and O'Loughlin; 1999, p. 151, Kolossov; 2001, p. 87). A number of scholars use the term “quasi-states” (Kolstø; 2006, Jackson; 1990) to define state-like actors. Jackson (1990) argues that entities continue to exist because of marginal support of a patron state and occasional protection of international law, for instance control over a specific territory based on the self-determination principle, which are at risk of consumption by stronger sovereign units.

Kolstø's (2006) definition includes entities that meet domestic requirements of statehood, but lack external sovereignty. Kolstø (2006) acknowledges that other terms such as “de facto states”, “unrecognized states”, “para-states” and “pseudo-states” have also been used to describe his conceptualization of the non-state phenomenon – the “quasi-state” (Kolstø; 2006, p. 725).

Kolossov and O'Loughlin (1999) also use the term to refer to state-like entities that perform some state functions, but are marred by criminal activities and are, at times, run by barons or drug mafias. Rywkin (2006) uses quasi-state as an umbrella term for states that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union that failed to achieve full statehood. Camyar (2005) defines “‘quasi-states’ as strong in internal territoriality and empirical statehood, but weak in external territoriality and juridical statehood (Camyar; 2005, p.1-3).

Stanislawski (2008) provides a wider definition of the quasi-state with an emphasis on both juridical–international recognition–and factual statehood–control over territory and effective government. Stanislawski’s (2008) quasi-state is variegated. Some quasi-states are “as-if-states” because they “enjoy international recognition and the rights and duties of states, but in effect, their internal power and control is limited or fragmented, non-existent”. On the other hand, “‘almost-states’ are ‘quasi-states’ that do not enjoy international recognition, but contrary to ‘as-if states’ they are characterized by efficient internal control of their territories and populations” (Stanislawski; 2008, p.366-368). Stanislawski (2008) introduces another category called “black spots” that lack both juridical and factual statehood requirements. “Black spots” are places that are neither under control of an existing government nor a secessionist entity that aspires to gain international recognition. Black spots “represent territories in which and from which both transnational organized crime (TOC) and terrorism operate, often becoming criminal-terrorist entities” (Stanislawski, 2008; p. 360-367).

Charles King (2001) while analyzing state-building processes in the post-Soviet republics defines non-state separatist entities as “state-like”, “de facto countries”, “unrecognized states”, and “quasi-states”. He concludes that these entities, notwithstanding the variegated terms used to describe them, have a functioning government, a specific territory but “without the imprimatur of international recognition” (King; 2001, p.525-528).

Kingston and Spears (2004) expand the de facto state definition prescribed in the literature, like that of Pegg (1998) and Florea (2014), and use the term “states-within-states”—non-state entities that have the “capacity to control defined pieces of territory, collect taxes, and conduct business with international and transitional actors” (Kingston and Spears; 2004, p.2)—as an umbrella term to define both de facto states and a wider range of entities. Their definition

includes entities that have declared independence and aspire to reach full statehood and militia groups that operate within borders of weak states.

Geldenhuis (2009, p.1), while admitting the validity of the term “de facto state”, uses “contested states” to describe secessionist movements that disengaged from their parent states, formed violable autonomous governments on their specific territory, and lack international recognition and membership of the United Nations. The defining features of “contested states” are their “internationally disputed nature of the purported statehood, manifested in their lack of de jure recognition” and that “their very right of statehood is challenged by the international community, resulting in no formal recognition at all or recognition by only a small number of established states” (p.7). These “aspirant states”, another term Geldenhuis uses, “experience collective non-recognition in the sense of being deliberately excluded from UN membership” (Geldenhuis; 2009, p. 7). The “contested state” definition is complemented by a temporal condition. The entity must have “a purportedly independent state for at least three years, desiring to be treated as a peer by confirmed states” (Geldenhuis; 2009, p. 4). Geldenhuis (2009) argues that his conceptualization renders these entities as sovereign and confirmed states excluding widespread recognition which leads to the “formal birth certificate of confirmed statehood, namely full UN membership” (Geldenhuis, 2009, p. 25). Entities that qualify for designation of contested states are “Abkhazia, Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kosovo, Somaliland, Palestine, Northern Cyprus, Western Sahara and Taiwan”, and “South Ossetia” (Geldenhuis; 2009, p. 2). Mirilovic and Siroky (2015;2016), like Geldenhuis, uses the label “aspirant states” to define secessionist entities that satisfy empirical and juridical requirements of statehood whose external sovereignty is contested due to a lack of or limited international recognition. Their conceptualization includes cases like entities such as “Palestine, Israel” and “Abkhazia, Crimea,

Kosovo, Taiwan, and Western Sahara” among others (Mirilovic and Siroky, 2015, p.264-265).

Berg and Pegg (2016) also use the term “aspirant” to define states that meet the basic requirement of statehood and are seeking external sovereignty through recognition.

Another prevalent term used to describe de facto entities is “unrecognized states” (Caspersen; 2012, Cooley and Mitchell; 2010). Affirming and building on Pegg’s (1998) definition of the de facto states, Caspersen (2012) adds some additional aspects to the conceptualization of de facto states. The criteria for unrecognized states are: A) an unrecognized state has achieved de facto independence, covering at last two-thirds of the territory to which it lays claim and includes its main city and key regions; B) its leadership is seeking to build further state institutions and demonstrates its own legitimacy; C) the entity has declared formal independence or demonstrated clear aspirations for independence, for example through an independence referendum, adoption of a currency, or similar act that clearly signals separate statehood; D) the entity has not gained international recognition or has, at the most, been recognized by its patron state and a few other states of no great importance; E) it has existed for at least two years (Caspersen; 2012, Caspersen; 2009, Pegg;1998).

DeLiosle (2002) uses “near-state” to describe a polity that “fail[s] to satisfy one of the elements of the statehood reflected in the 1933 Montevideo Convention” (DeLiosle; 2002, p. 741). The 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States in Article 1 defines states in the following way: “The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states” (Stanislawski; 2008, p.366-367). Though international recognition is not among the elements included in the Montevideo Convention,

DeLiosle (2002) implies lack of recognition curtails the materialization of the last requirement – capacity to enter into relations with other states.

Toomla (2014) analyzes the different definitions and labels for de facto states such as de facto states” (Pegg, 1998; Lynch, 2004; Bartmann, 2004), contested states (Geldenhuys; 2009), unrecognized states (Caspersen (2012), quasi-states (Kolstø; 2006), pseudo-states (Kolossoff and O’Loughlin; 1999), states-within-states (Spears; 2004), and state-like entities (King; 2001) (Toomla; 2014, p.47). His comparison of these definitions and labels reveals the common themes used by the authors which are also prevalent in the literature. These include “territory, population government, and capabilities for international relations, and absence of recognition, legitimacy or some indigenous capacity for existing – popular support, temporal criterion – some threshold in years that must be exceeded in de facto states’ existence, declaration of independence or some other statement of intent” (Toomla; 2014, p.48). Toomla (2014) ends his analysis of the various definitions and terms with a working definition. The definition involves both “sovereignty – internal and external; empirical and judicial” elements of statehood (Toomla; 2014, p.57), and the consensus in the literature. Thus, he defines a de facto state as “state that fulfils all the criteria set in the Montevideo Convention but lacks sufficient recognition from fellow states” (Toomla; 2014, p.58). This definition consists of “two dimensions of statehood, juridical and empirical. The former is formal recognition by other countries, with the threshold being enough recognition to pass a vote for UN membership” (Toomla; 2014, p.58). Toomla (2014) uses Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Taiwan, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Somaliland, and Western Sahara as cases that qualify and appropriately meet his definitional criteria.

Some scholars question whether using the term “state” is appropriate while referring to these entities regardless of what suffixes or prefixes are added. Yemelianova, for example, argues that international law, under the constitutive theory of recognition, “requires a state’s recognition by other states as the essential condition of its sovereignty. Therefore, it delegitimizes the term ‘de facto state’ on the grounds that an entity lacking international recognition could not be regarded as a state and a subject of international law” (2015, p.221). Similarly, Crawford (2007) citing constitutive theory of recognition and international law argues that “there is no such thing as a de facto State” (2007, p. 464) irrespective of what adjective or modifier is added. Coggins (2014) also sides with Crawford in objecting to use of the term ‘state’, arguing that “without recognition, those actors may be many things: secessionists, liberation movements, insurgents, anti-colonialists, terrorists, ethnic rebels, or indigenous peoples, but they may not be states” (2014, p. 27). However, a wide majority of scholars studying de facto states justify using the term “state” because these entities “satisfy the basic, formal requirements of statehood in international law save for recognition, they aspire to confirmed statehood, and they in many ways act like typical states” (Geldenhuis; 2009, p. 26).

Despite various forms of progress in the study of de facto states, the field still remains persistently mired in controversy over precise definition and terminology. In addition to the definitions and terms reviewed so far, there is a number of other alternative terms used for de facto states’ conceptualization by Pegg (2017) – “secessionist entities that control territory, provide governance, secure popular support, and aspire to widely recognized sovereign statehood and yet fail to attain it” (2017, p.19). Isachenk (2012) uses “informal states”, Wood (2010) introduced “limbo states”, and others’ preferred terms include “phantom state” (Byman and King, 2012), and “proto-state” (Coggin, 2014).

Despite her past reservations, Caspersen's (2016) adoption of the term "de facto state" was considered an effort to end the controversy and promote it as "the most appropriate and most neutral" (O'Loughlin et al., 2011, p. 2) as well as the "least inaccurate and least offensive" (Broers, 2013, p. 69), the controversy remains unresolved.

The division over the precise definition and terminology continues. However, there is a "coalescing around three main terms: contested states (e.g., Geldenhuys, 2009; Ker Lindsay, 2012; Kyris, 2015), unrecognized states (e.g., Caspersen, 2012; Richards, 2014; Richards & Smith, 2015), and de facto states" (e.g., Bahcheli, Bartmann, & Srebniak, 2004; Berg, 2013; Broers, 2013; Florea, 2014; Johnson & Smaker, 2014; Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2012; Lynch, 2004; MacQueen, 2015; O'Loughlin et al., 2011; Pegg, 1998; Popescu, 2007; Voller, 2013; Yemelianova, 2015) (Pegg, 2017,19). The division among scholars over definition and terminology has not helped the understanding of these entities. The controversy does not seem to end in the near future. Though there is a proliferation in the use of diverse terminology and definition, Pegg argues that most authors studying the phenomenon refer "to essentially the same things" (2017, p.20) and broadly accept Toomla's (2016) conceptualization of de facto states as "entities that fulfil the Montevideo criteria for statehood but lack international recognition" (Toomla, 2016, p.331). The conceptualization of these entities is disputed. There are examples of secessionist entities that fall under two or three definitions. For example, table: 1.1 summarizes the different entities related to the various conceptual definitions.

Table 1:0:1 Different Conceptions of Non-State Entities

De Facto States (Pegg,1998)	Contested States (Geldenhuis)	De Facto States (Toomla,2014)	Aspiring States	Aspiring States (Mirilovic and Siroky, 2014,2015; Geldenhuis,2009)
Abkhazia	Abkhazia	Abkhazia	Abkhazia	Abkhazia
Nagorno-Karabakh	Kosovo	Kosovo	Kosovo	Kosovo
Northern Cyprus	Nagorno-Karabakh	Nagorno-Karabakh	Nagorno-Karabakh	Nagorno-Karabakh
Somaliland	Northern Cyprus	Northern Cyprus	Northern Cyprus	Northern Cyprus
South Ossetia	Palestine	Palestine	Palestine	Palestine
Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan
Transnistria	Transnistria	Transnistria	Transnistria	Transnistria
Western Sahara	South Ossetia	South Ossetia	South Ossetia	South Ossetia
	Somaliland	Somaliland	Somaliland	Somaliland
	Western Sahara	Western Sahara	Western Sahara	Western Sahara

Two conclusions can be drawn from the literature review about definitions and terminologies. First, despite improvements in the overall understanding and dynamics of these non-state polities, the controversy over the use of the appropriate terms has not been resolved. The myriad of different labels amalgamates into three broad terms: ‘contested states’, ‘unrecognized states’, and ‘de facto states’. With few exceptions, almost all scholars combine the term state with a prefix of their choice. This unsettled area allows researchers and scholars to pick the term of their choosing with due justification while studying these phenomena. Second, the definitions are narrowing, and the concept stretching is contained. As Pegg (2017) points out most scholars of the subfield are broadly talking about the same thing and accept Toomla’s (2014, 2016) definition. With this view in mind and to avoid confusion, the term “aspirant” (Berg and Pegg, 2016; Geldenhuis, 2009; Mirilovic and Siroky, 2015, 2016) can be combined with the term state, thus creating ‘aspirant state’. The term ‘aspirant state’ encompasses polities that meet the conceptualizations by Toomla (2014; 2016), Berg and Pegg (2016), Geldenhuis

(2009), and Mirilovic and Siroky (2015; 2016). Therefore, from the analysis of different definitions and terms, a working definition can be formed for aspirant states. An aspirant state is a recognition-seeking separatist polity that has managed to break away from its parent state and meets the Montevideo Convention criteria for statehood – (1) a permanent population; (2) a defined territory; (3) a government; and (4) capacity to enter into relations with the other states – that is unrecognized or partially recognized. This definition of aspirant state denotes two things. First, the entities meet the four criteria for statehood as enumerated in the Montevideo Convention, and are partially recognized or unrecognized. Second, all these entities aspire to become externally sovereign, internationally confirmed, and eventually admitted to the UN as full members. Thus, the term aspirant state captures all these aspects.

Based on this working definition, an aspirant state is operationally defined as a secessionist entity that has a number of characteristics, which include: 1) Meet the four criteria of Montevideo Convention; A) a permanent population, B) a defined territory, C) government, and D) capacity to enter into relations with other states. 2) The entity has declared independence and intent to separate from home state. 3) The movement must last at least two years. 4) It is a recognition-seeking entity that has gained none or partial recognition. This operationalization is not original. It is a combination of the operationalization employed by Coggins (2014) and Toomla (2014) except the two characteristics – recognition-seeking entity and existence for two years – which have been included for this study. The two elements are added to complement the already existing operationalization for two reasons. First, in order to limit the number of cases. The spatial and temporal parameters of Toomla (2014) and Coggins (2014) are vast covering a large number of cases over several decades. For example, Coggins' (2014) study includes small secessionist cases and former colonies. Some of which have existed for twenty-four hours to a

few weeks in the twentieth century. Not all her cases are recognition-seeking entities. Second, the literature proposes a minimum of two years of existence for a secessionist entity in order to establish juridical and empirical basis of statehood that serve as the main components for satisfying the Montevideo requirement for statehood (Caspersen, 2012, 2016; Pegg, 1998).

This research will study cases that meet the working definition of an aspirant state as operationalized above. The entities meeting the working definition are Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Taiwan, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Somaliland, and Western Sahara. This research will cross examine the recognition decisions of UN member states against these ten cases. The research design chapter will cover the methodological discussion of case selection and provide detailed justification for why and how the ten entities meet the working definition of aspirant states. The same section will also provide background information about each of the ten cases. The following subsection covers the different approaches and practices to international recognition and proposes a working definition for international recognition used in this research.

International Recognition

The concept of recognition, much like de facto state, is somewhat disputed in the literature because of its multidimensionality crossing-cutting different disciplines. There is no agreement over the precise definition of recognition. The concept is variegated connoting different meanings. Its complexity arises from the fact that the concept entails a combination of politics, national and international law, formal and informal practices of recognition (Kelsen, 1941). One reason it is difficult to “resolve the controversy over state recognition theory is because the international legal system translates political controversies into legal questions that

can then be addressed through legal means”, and therefore, raise the question over the entity’s “nature of statehood [and the] degree of discretion that states have in acting on the international plane” (Worster, 2009, p.116).

Some scholars count three reasons why recognition is controversial in the literature. These include: 1) Recognition is a question of politics rather than law as demonstrated by the practice and foreign policy of states. States make recognition decisions based on their national interests using legal principles as camouflage for political decisions. 2) Recognition, in form and substance, for the most part is a unilateral diplomatic act. There is no collective procedure for conferring recognition based on established legal principles. 3) The variegated nature of recognition; recognition of a new state, a new government, and a belligerency. There is also de jure, de facto, conditional, implied, or implicit and explicit or express recognition. Each of these belong to different legal principles and entail various legal consequences (Bledsoe and Boczek, 1987; Bahcheli and Srebrink, 2004, Högger, 2015; Stinson, 1924).

International recognition is disputed in international law. It is dominated by two competing theories of state recognition, declaratory and constitutive theories (Badescu, 2016). According to the declaratory theory, an entity becomes state upon satisfying the four empirical criteria established by the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. These include (1) permanent population, (2) a defined territory, (3) government, and (4) capacity to enter into relations with other states (Badescu, 2016). Declaratory theory is built on the objective criteria outlined in the Montevideo Convention. when all the conditions are met, statehood is recognized regardless of the international community’s approval or disapproval. According to the declaratory, recognition is almost irrelevant because the status of statehood is based on facts and not on individual state discretion; if statehood is a fact, it follows that

recognition should be automatic (Eckert, 2002). Constitutive theory argues that it is only by recognition of other sovereign states that an entity can become a state and gain international legitimacy. This theory challenges the Montevideo Convention in that an entity does not need to meet factual requirements, but rather the entity automatically gains membership into the international community through recognition by other states that ultimately allow an entity to become a state and gain international legitimacy (Baldwin, 2009).

Grant (1999) and Van (2014) argue that the constitutive theory is problematic because it attributes a political rather than a legal character to recognition. There is no prescribed process for an entity to follow to formally gain recognition and international legitimacy as a state. However, the UN, the International Court of Justice, and their member states have accepted that, as customary international law, there is a set of criteria established in the Montevideo Convention articles, which an entity must meet in order to claim self-determination and gain formal recognition by international community (Crawford, 2006; Coggins, 2008).

Notwithstanding the controversial and complex nature of the concept, it is worth reviewing the major definitions that enjoy a degree of consensus among scholars. The institute of international law has defined recognition “as the free act by which one or more states acknowledge the existence on a definite territory of a human society which is politically organized, independent of any other existing state, and capable of observing the obligation of international law”, which has a wider acceptance among scholars of international law (Institut De Droit International, 185). Formal recognition results from either explicit declaration or from an implicit action based on political considerations, such as the establishment of diplomatic relations with the new state. This can be full or conditional recognition (Brown, 1936, p.689-694).

The practice of states draws a distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* recognition which usually takes place on the basis of political realities and consideration of national interests. Recognition *de jure* means that according to the recognizing state, the state or government recognized formally fulfils the requirement laid down by international law, for instance the Montevideo Convention's criteria of statehood, for effective participation in the international community. Additional aspects of the *de jure* recognition include a formal and explicit acceptance of the existence of a state by the international legal and political community, usually embodied by the exchange of ambassadors. *De facto* recognition on the other hand, means that in the opinion of the recognizing state, provisionally and temporarily and with all due reservation for the future, the state or government recognized fulfils the above requirement in fact. *De facto* recognition is provisional and temporary and could be withdrawn in the future. However, it is usually, not always, followed by *de jure* recognition (Brownlie, 2010, p.91-92; Boas, 2013; Delaney, 2008; Shaw, 2017).

The strict distinctions about various kind of recognition and their subsequent legal consequences is primarily a debated topic for legal scholars; for example, Brownlie (2010), Boas (2013), Shaw (2017), Lauterpach (1947), Rich (1993), Chen (1951), and Ben Bot (1968). The literature is weak or limited on categorization of political recognition. From a political point of view, recognition of a state or government "means that the recognizing state is willing to enter into political and other relations with the recognized state or government, relations of the kind which normally exist between members of the family of nations", through "a unilateral declaration of the recognizing state, or by a bilateral transaction, namely, by an exchange of notes between the government of the recognizing state, on the one hand, and the government of the recognized state or the recognized government on the other" (Kelsen, 1941, p. 605).

There is inconsistency over precise definition of recognition due to interlacing of different disciplines. Ryan Griffith captures all major elements of the various disciplines in his definition of international recognition as “a body of evolving norms, rules, and practices that determines which claimants can become independent states” (2018, p.80). Dozer (1966) synchronizes the various aspects of recognition in his definition. In the broadest technical and historical sense, “recognition in international relations refers to the acknowledgment by a nation of any change in a situation in a foreign country.” He further explains that recognition is “an attribute of sovereignty by which a nation, government, or people fixes its relations with other nations, governments, and peoples, thus establishing or reestablishing a legal continuity which has, for one reason or another, been broken.” Such a practice he suggests is “to the recognition of new states, the recognition of belligerency or insurgency, and the recognition of new governments” (Dozer, 1966, p.1).

However, the general practical conceptualization of recognition, notwithstanding its controversial nature among different academic disciplines, as exhibited in the foreign policy decisions of states, is as follows. It refers to “a discretionary unilateral act exercised by the government of a state officially acknowledging the existence of another state, government, or belligerency” (Bledsoe and Boczek, 1987, p. 44-45), which can take place through an explicit declaration or implicit action as well as in a formal or informal manner. This conceptualization of the practice of international recognition best captures different understanding and components of the concept. It will be employed as the definitional framework throughout this study.

The following section reviews and evaluates the major explanations and reasons that motivate states to extend or withhold recognition.

Recognition Decisions: Factors and Motivations

The literature provides a diverse range of states' motivations to extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. Though this study focuses on examining the recognition of ten cases by all UN member states, the literature viewed is not specific to the selected cases. Instead, the purpose of this review is to examine and summarize the existing explanations and factors behind recognition decisions in general unrestricted to the cases. The factors and explanations are grouped into smaller subsections for clarity and organization purposes. The first group of factors is recognition in the legal and normative contexts.

International law and normative explanations

One of the prevailing approaches on recognition in the literature is its position in the context of international legal system. Krasner (1999) maintains that recognition and external sovereignty is and ought to be granted to aspirant states on the legal basis instead of political reasons. Proponents of the declaratory theory of recognition suggest that an entity automatically becomes a sovereign state upon meeting the criteria of statehood established in the Montevideo Convention and abiding by the international legal standards. For them, recognition by existing members of the system should follow automatically when these conditions are met. These scholars present a normative understanding of recognition and focus on dynamics of the sovereign states and entities that actively seek international recognition and how such dynamics are placed in the context of international law (Tanisha Fazal, 2008,2014; Frances Boyle,1990; Joel Migdal, 2001, Stanford Silverberg,1998; Stephen Krasner,1999). They, however, are weak on examining the motivations and reasons behind why states recognize some aspirants and avoid extending recognition to others.

Fabry (2010) also places recognition of new states in a normative context. His analysis of the practice of recognition covers several centuries beginning with recognition of the United States by France and ends with the Post-Cold War period. Fabry suggests that “de facto recognition” as practiced by “the United States and the United Kingdom in the 19th century” (Fabry, 2010, p.219-221) is the only viable method to be practiced by states while considering recognition decision. Fabry advocates the de facto recognition doctrine based on which states do not interfere in the domestic affairs of others and let people determine their own destiny, through peace or war, and the winner should be recognized. He further suggests that if a state is divided into separate entities through peaceful or armed confrontation, it incumbent upon other states in the system to respect the outcome and recognize all the new polities.

Scholars preoccupied with international law and normative approaches to recognition admit that ultimately politics take precedent over legal principles (Rich, 1993; Silverberg, 1998). Over half a century ago, Lauterbach (1944, p.386-387) argued that the act of recognition is not a matter governed by law, but a question of policy where factors based on political realities take preference than legal principles. His argument still holds true. A significant plurality of international law scholars posits that recognition is an optional and discretionary political decision, mostly individual and unique to each state lacking uniformity, taken not in obedience to a legal duty, but in pursuance of the exigencies of national interests. As such, recognition decisions, for the most part, do not fit an established and generalizable pattern that would carry enough explanatory value capable of predictability and consistency (Crawford, 2006; Freudenthuss, 1982, Lauterbach, 1947; Portman, 2010; Rich,1993; Saganek, 2016).

Rich (1993) examined the recognition of new states that emerged following the collapse of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the ones seceding from the Socialist Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). His study shows that recognition was conferred to the new states on individual basis at the discretion of the recognizer states. However, the European Community (EC) adopted a unified policy, which is the only time a collective decision representing several countries was made regarding recognition. The EC policy guidelines in addition to traditional requirements for statehood included new conditions. These include requiring states to “have constituted themselves on a democratic basis, have accepted the appropriate international obligations and have committed themselves in good faith to a peaceful process and to negotiations”. Moreover, the guidelines were only applicable to the Baltic states not all the new emerging states, which demonstrates that the EC’s policy was calculated based both on “the normal standards of international practice and the political realities in each case” (Hannum, 1993, p.61-63). Rich (1993) ends his study of some twenty new states emerging from the implosion of USSR and SFRY with the following conclusion:

[R]ecognition of states has become less predictable and more a matter of political discretion... The traditional criteria for statehood retain an uneasy existence alongside the new EC Guidelines, which have been particularly influential in relation to the recognition of the new states emerging from the USSR and Yugoslavia...Membership of the UN has also been seen differently by different countries insofar as a vote in favor may amount to recognition. It now seems that the 'political realities' have gained primacy over the inclinations to maintain consistency by applying accepted criteria to test the fact of statehood. (p.63-65).

One of the long standing international law principles requires states to respect the sovereignty of other states including their independence and territorial integrity. However, this notion is challenged by the “self-determination” principle. Self-determination is a recent

phenomenon, emerging in the aftermath of World War I that responds to demands of national groups seeking to divide territory. Support for the principle increased as it was outlined in Chapter I, Article I and in Chapter 9, Article 55 of the United Nations Charter (Whitehall, 2016). The principle of self-determination to a right, “especially after the 1960 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples, when the term came to denote decolonization. However, self-determination applied to territories and not to peoples” (Carley, 1996, p.1). This principle is sometimes invoked by aspirant states while attempting to gain international recognition. The parent or home states, from which secessionist states seek separation, challenge the principle with the longstanding principle of international law – the territorial integrity. The self-determination doctrine has not received much support among statesmen and scholars as a basis for creation of new states and their international recognition due to its vague nature and complex applicability as well as a lack of enforcing mechanism in the international system. Gunter (1979) studied the reasons behind UN’s unwillingness and failure to uphold its norms of self-determination and territorial integrity in the cases of Western Sahara, Belize, Falklands, Gibraltar, and East Timor. He concludes that unclarity in the terms of these norms, “the weak voting power of the Third World majority” in the UN, and the “sheer military power of the norm breakers” (Gunter, 1979, p.231) explain the failure of the UN to appropriately apply its established norms. Other scholars argue the principle had a specific temporal importance. Griffiths (2018) also address the competing narratives of the two norms that affect the international recognition regime. Griffiths much like Gunter (1979) maintains that it is the states who decide which norms matter. As he puts it “One norm implies that borders should not be changed; the other implies that stateless nations should be able to change them. The resulting efforts to balance these competing demands can be summed up by the question: who counts?

Who counts for the fullest expression of self-determination, and who does not? Answering that question is complicated by the fact that nations are fuzzy, overlapping, and protean categories” (Griffiths, 2018, p.80).

Hannum (1990) for example maintains that self-determination was a more appealing norm to support decolonization following the end of World War II. Carley (1996) summarizes the applicability and characteristics of the principle in four ways: “First, self-determination referred only to decolonization. Second, it did not apply to peoples but to territories. Third, self-determination was now considered an absolute right—though, again, for colonies only; this marked a significant change from the previous era. Finally, self-determination did not allow for secession; instead, the territorial integrity of existing states and most colonial territories was assumed” (1996, p.4). Mörkenstam (2015) argues that the principle can be invoked while determining domestic policies regarding rights of minorities and indigenous people and their territories. Many scholars agree that hundreds of new nations can come into existence because of racial, linguistic, ethnic, religious, ideational, and territorial indemnifications if self-determination is considered the foundation for statehood (Binder and Crossett, 1993; Gellner, 1993; Hannum, 1990). Thus, the validity of self-determination is debated and often confronted with the legal principle of territorial integrity.

There are a few doctrines that are invoked, at least in a historical context, when the issue of international recognition is at stake both by scholars and statesmen. Tabor or Woodrow Wilson principle, also alternatively called the Tabor Doctrine, is one of them. This principle was formulated at the suggestion of Ecuador’s foreign minister, Tabor, in a treaty of the Central American Republics in 1907. The doctrine suggests that states should not extend recognition to governments and states established as result of coup d’état, civil war, or any other forms of

internal violence until people, through their representatives, have organized a constitutional government (Peterson, 2002). Another similar principle is the Stimson Doctrine established in 1930s, which is a policy of nonrecognition. This U.S. policy established in 1932, elaborated through a note to the Empire of Japan and the Republic of China, declares that states created as result of aggression, international territorial changes by force, and annexations are subject to none-recognition. This policy was also invoked when the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (Turns, 2003).

The Estrada Doctrine posits a counter argument presented in the Tabor and Stimson doctrines. The doctrine, named after Genaro Estrada the foreign minister of Mexico, was enunciated by Mexico in 1930 and remained the core of Mexico's foreign policy until the year 2000. A few other countries, mainly in Latin America, adopted its proposition. The doctrine suggests that a recognition decision of states would not be made in case of regime changes inside a state. Instead the recognizer state would confine themselves to the maintenance or withdrawal, as they may deem advisable, of their diplomatic agents. The recognizer will accept whatever government is in effective control without raising the issue of recognition. This policy is grounded in the principles of nonintervention, self-determination of all nations, and peaceful resolution of disputes. It focused on recognition of states irrespective of unconstitutional change in the government of another state (Fernandez, 2009). The doctrine places emphasis on refraining in domestic affairs of other countries and use of domestic factors to question international sovereignty. It is evident from the text of the policy announcement where it states that Mexico will make no "declarations in the sense of grants of recognition, since that nation considers such a course is an insulting practice and one which, in addition to the fact that it offends the sovereignty of other nations, implies that judgment of some sort may be passed upon

the internal affairs of those nations by other governments, inasmuch as the latter assume, in effect, an attitude of criticism, when they decide, favorably or unfavorably, as to the legal qualifications of foreign regimes” (Greig, 1991, p. 41-42). The first two doctrines weigh in on the domestic dynamics or facts on the ground when issuing recognition. They are often considered as political tools employed through foreign policy of the recognizing states to reach their political objectives. On the contrary, the Estrada doctrine is a noninterventionist approach with little to no emphasis on changes in regime and paths undertaken by people to form governments in a state or territory.

The legal and normative explanations are insufficient in fully uncovering the reasons behind recognition decisions. The following subsection will review other explanations in the literature on states’ recognition decisions, which are either less or not at all, grounded in international law and normative principles.

The systemic level explanations

The literature identifies a set of factors, grounded in some broader classical power-based explanations, namely the role of great powers, external and domestic security concerns, strategic alliance, and enmity at the international level as important influencing variables behind state’s recognition decisions. Bridget Coggins has carried out one of the recent systematic studies of international recognition. Coggins (2011) introduces a model that explains why states choose to recognize or withhold recognition of secessionist states. Her model heavily focuses on the significant role of the great powers in the system. She likens the practice of state recognition to a social club membership. Admission to the club depends on collective decisions of the members, especially the key members – great powers – that she calls “friends in high places” (Coggins,

2011, p. 435). Coggins's model suggests states recognition decisions are based on their parochial political concerns, which she divides into three broad categories. First is geostrategic and external security. The core of this category of factors includes "strategy, alliance, and enmity" (Coggins, 2014, p. 45) and how "considerations of international security environment and the effect that new international participants is anticipated to have on the status quo" (Coggins, 2014, p.46). She further elaborates that when states think recognition of a new state will "weaken their enemies, strengthen themselves and their friends, or otherwise generate positive security consequences, they will more likely prefer its independence" if otherwise, they will withhold recognition (Coggins, 2018, p. 29).

Second is domestic security alternatively referred to as vulnerability (Coggins, 2014, p. 46). Recognition of a secessionist abroad will encourage domestic secessionist movements. States take into consideration secessionist movements inside their borders when making recognition decisions. Third is "systematic stability" that should make great powers "prefer to coordinate their recognition whenever possible" (Coggins, 2014, p.47). If great powers coordinate their recognition decision, a wide spread recognition is likely to follow, and the new state's external sovereignty is secured, because great powers play a pivotal role in swaying international opinion and behavior. On the other hand, if great powers disagree, it is likely that that status quo or non-recognition will be maintained. When great powers agree that recognition is appropriate new states, with a few exceptions, emerge and reach statehood while disagreement leaves the fate of the new states in a continued controversial status (Coggins, 2001, 449-450).

The vulnerability concept in addition to its strict security dimension is linked to other areas of domestic politics and foreign policy of the recognizing states; great powers and the rest. National security that encompasses several areas including self-preservation are other areas

affected by the recognizer's recognition decisions (Coggins, 2011, 2014; Sideman, 2001; Treisman, 1997). The vulnerability proposition posits that states facing domestic secessionist movements do not risk their own security and territorial integrity by extending recognition to another aspirant state. This can embolden separatist movements in the vulnerable countries, which the recognizer states cannot afford and or are unwilling to commit such a risk (Ayoob, 1995; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Herbst, 1989; Touval, 1972).

The logic applies both to small and greater states. Coggins (2011) maintains that politics of recognition is heavily influenced by the logic of the vulnerability among great powers, especially when the domestic security of the recognizer is directly affected by its foreign policy decisions towards aspirant states. Bucheit (1978, p.103) argues that the vulnerability factor is especially acute among weak states with domestic threats of secession where "even the slightest recognition of secession...would be as unwise as showing blood in the lion's cage". The vulnerability proposition explains why states with domestic separatist movements like Spain avoid extending recognition to aspirant states for example Kosovo and Palestine (Hill and Jewett, 1994). Some Scholars challenge the vulnerability explanation. Sideman (1997) and Lewis (2002) demonstrate through empirical studies that several states in Africa and even major powers like Russia, facing internal separatist movements, have actively supported separatist movements, and recognized aspirant states like Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Laitan and Samatar, 1987).

Several other scholars provide similar arguments to that of Coggins (2011; 2014; 2018) about the motives behind recognition decisions. Great powers and occasionally regional powers are decisive players who can influence whether to extend or withhold recognition (Coggins 2011, Ker-Lindsay 2012, Sterio 2012). Mikulas Fabry (2012) and Savo Heleta (2014) contend that recognition of a secessionist state by a great power ensures whether a secessionist state will be

successful in reaching one of its vital goal – external sovereignty and full statehood – or not, which is essential for survival of a state. Sterio (2012) maintains that secession and international recognition are nearly impossible without the support and backing of a powerful patron state. For instance, regional and international governments provided Kosovo and South Sudan with the diplomatic support, in the form of recognition, necessary for statehood. In the case of Kosovo, it also received extensive economic, military, and administrative support on its way to independence. A patron state does not necessarily have to be a great power, it can be a regional or even an ordinary state in terms of regional and global status and influence. A patron state is usually an internationally recognized and sovereign state that provides political, economic, military, and diplomatic support to a de facto state. Support of a patron state, with few exceptions, generally an essential component for survivability of a secessionist entity (Debski et al. 2017, p.3). Recognition by a great power to a degree legitimizes the claims of aspirant states and such a recognition can prevent home states from reversing the aspirant states' progress in seceding from the home state (Ayoob, 1995; Krasner, 1999; Mayall, 1999). Moreover, recognition by a great power, in addition to its diplomatic and political weight in the international system, carries practical advantages as well. Recognition of a secessionist state by a great power implies that it is willing to provide economic and diplomatic assistance to ensure the survival of the aspirant state (Batta, Case, and Shiveley, 2010; Peterson, 1982).

As mentioned earlier, Coggins (2014) examined recognition of secessionist states by great powers from 1931 to 2002 and concluded that three factors determine great powers decision-making regarding recognizing secessionist states. She further argues that great powers can provide a critical mass of support for the aspiring states in the system, influence collective decision-making, and decide whether recognition of a secessionist state will affect the

international system's security. Similarly, Byman, (2001), Krasner (1999), Jackson and James (1993) also maintain that great powers play a pivotal role and influence other states' recognition decisions on secessionist state. The great powers' motivations, they maintain, are usually driven by geo-strategic objectives, domestic politics, and at times normative norms. They further argue that the lesser powers in the system follow the great powers decisions for a variety of reasons; to gain favor with great powers or other reasons, such as the bandwagon effect and balance of power principles grounded in *realpolitik*'s power-based explanations of the international system.

Balance of power and dominant political ideologies among great powers and other states in the system, for example communism and liberal democracies, also affect recognition of aspirant states. Notwithstanding a few exceptions like Germany's unilateral recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, this was a dominant behavior in the international system during the Cold War era. During this period, recognition of secessionist states was linked to competition between the United States and the Soviet Union and the states that were allied to both sides, either through official strategic agreements or through ideological similarities (Crawford, 1996; Galloway, 1978; Warbrick, 1992). The end of bipolarity in the international system following the Cold War presents an opportunity to explore and test the explanatory power of factors that are not directly deriving from power politics and the realist tradition. The post-Cold War era presents an opportunity to test and explore the role of regime type, identity relations and other cultural factors and their influence over international recognition of aspirant states.

Although great powers play a significant role in determining the success and failure of secessionist states' ambition to become independent states through granting external legitimacy by means of recognizing them, they do not act uniformly. The variation in great powers' positions towards secessionist states changes based on major trends in international politics. For

instance, the United States did not support secessionist movements before the 1990s. It tended to support secessionist movements after the 1990s and the fall of Soviet Union (Paquin 2007). Some scholars maintain that the variation in America's response to secessionist movements after becoming the sole super power in the system is best explained by "defensive positionalism" (Paquin 2007, p.3). Based on this logic the United States' decision to recognize a secessionist state is driven by its desire to maintain its hegemonic and powerful position in the system, and its pre-1990 anti-secession position was driven by ideational basis and the bi-polar politics of the international system (Grieco, 1996; Paquin, 2004; Waltz, 2008). The post-1990s variation to extend or withhold recognition by the United States can be explained by the fact that the United States is a stability-seeking state, which affects and influences other states' decisions regarding recognition (Rich, 2011).

Though great powers, regional powers, and the hegemon in the system are significant in the recognition of aspirant states, recognition by small powers is important as well. Recognition of aspirant states by a substantial number of small powers facilitates aspirant states' path towards gaining membership of the United Nations (UN). The UN requires two-thirds support of UN's General Assembly in order to admit new members. Thus, both small and great power states matter (XIV Rule 136). Furthermore, aspiring states' recognition by small states expands its external recognition, which then can facilitate treaty making, offer a shield against legal action, gain membership in key international organizations, and establish diplomatic immunity among other things (Krasner, 1999; Rich, 2009).

Many scholars purported the significance of recognition by all states, especially small powers, as it provides an opportunity to examine other broader questions of states' behavior in the state. Specifically, empirical examination of recognition by small states can help to

understand how states balance demands of their allies, domestic and regional constraints, and their relationship with parent states as well as key international organizations (Ingebritsen, 2006; Gvalia, Siroky, Lebanidze and Lashvili, 2013; Kissinger 2011). The system level explanations are major decisive factors in recognition decisions. However, domestic and national politics of recognizer states also have a significant impact over recognition decisions. The next section explains the link between domestic politics and recognition of aspirant states.

Domestic and national politics

National politics of recognizer states can influence foreign policy and recognition decisions. Crawford (1996) studied Germany's unilateral recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. She argues that domestic politics shape recognition decisions under two conditions. First, "domestic factors are likely to outweigh external factors in shaping preferences when the issue is not clearly one of national security". Second, "domestic politics shape substantive preferences when a high level of uncertainty surrounds the issue", such as a lack of clear guidelines for recognition of new states in the international system, in Germany's case the EC, and the ambiguous nature of diplomatic recognition in the international system (Crawford, 1996, p.518). In a separate article Crawford (1995) discusses how domestic politics in Germany pushed statesmen to unilaterally recognize Croatia and Slovenia to promote the growing power of Germany in the international system. Crawford considers the pivotal political pressure from interest and lobbying groups in Germany that influenced recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. For instance, the lobbying efforts of Croatians living in Germany and the role of the emissary of Croatia who had direct contact with the foreign policy advisors of the German government (Crawford, 1995, p.8-9).

Crawford's preceding argument about the influence of interest groups on foreign policy and recognition decisions in Germany is applicable to other countries as well. Interest groups and their participation in and influence on national foreign policy, particularly in the United States, have been largely studied. The various interest groups advocate political, ethnic, racial, religious, or economic interests. They work to ensure that politicians and government officials see it as part of the national interest and, therefore, affect U.S. Foreign policy. The Armenian American lobby, the Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Cuban-American lobby, and the Israeli Lobby are among the interest groups that affect American foreign policy at various degrees (Said 1981; Ahrari 1987a; Brenner, Haney and Vanderbush, 2004; Lindsay 2004; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007; Kirk 2008; Rubenzer 2008; Vanderbush, 2009; Rubenzer and Redd 2010).

Interest groups play a significant role in American foreign policy. Their role is not as prevalent in other countries as it is in the United States (Haney and Vanderbush, 1999; Shain 1999; Smith, 2000). The Israel Lobby greatly influences U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine, and the Palestinians' aspirations to reach full statehood. The greater political influence of The Israeli Lobby is one of the main reasons why U.S. refuses to recognize Palestine and vetoes Palestine's application for statehood in the United Nations Security Council (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007; Smith, 2000). Ross (2013) studied the foreign policy influence of Muslim interest groups in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. He concludes that their influence has been minor or non-existent. Especially the influence and advocacy of these interest groups for statehood of Palestine and Kosovo.

There are several lobbying groups in Russia that affect Russian foreign policy. The Russian Orthodox Church is among the domestic groups that play a substantial role in influencing Russian policy. It has advocated the reunification of Eastern Slavic orthodox people,

advocacy for Russian nationalism, and its role in steering Russian foreign policy in the Balkan conflict (Marušiak, 2015; Lomagin, 2012; Oganessian, 2012). The literature on interest groups affecting foreign policy of other major countries especially international recognition of aspirant state, members of the United Nations Security Council for example, is weak or non-existent. Home state also alternatively referred to as the parent state whose territorial integrity is at perils with an aspirant state separating from it actively engages recognizer states to influence their recognition decisions. The following section will review how and why home states engage recognizer states to influence their recognition decision.

The home state factor

Another significant dimension in conjunction with recognition of aspirant states is the relationship or struggle between the aspirant state and the home or parent state. Home states that stand to lose territory often lobby other countries to withhold international recognition from the aspiring state. Home states can deny independence, deploy force if necessary, and most importantly request the international community to respect its territorial integrity and avoid recognizing the breakaway region (Griffiths, 2016). Moreover, the debate over the right of self-determination and territorial integrity gives home states an advantage because the long tradition of territorial integrity, established since the Westphalian Peace, tend to take precedence over the right of self-determination. Home states engage in negotiations with key regional and other states, small and large powers, to prevent recognition of the secessionist region. Other strategies of parent states include portraying the secessionist movement as a foreign invasion or interference. Parent states try to limit secessionist movements' ability to access and establish relations with the outside world. Sometimes states, such as the United States, favored the

position of home states' demand for respecting their territorial integrity to avoid insecurity and instability. Many states also fear recognition of secessionist movements will have a domino effect and lead to disintegration of states whose populace is not homogenous, multiethnic states for example, and thus create security challenges at the international level and domestic conflicts inside these states (Fabry, 2010; Ker-Lindsay, 2012a, 2013b; Fazal and Griffiths, 2014; Paquin, 2007; Nye, 2002).

Ker-Lindsay (2018) summarizes the counter-secession strategies of home or parent states into four interlocking components: 1) maintain claim to territory, which focuses on the persistent efforts of home states trying "to ensure that the world knows that the attempted secession is unacceptable" (Ker-Lindsay, 2018, p.87). This is done through several means including a parliamentary resolution declaring the secession attempts illegal. 2) Prevent recognition, which involves active diplomatic campaign and lobbying by the home state in the international arena. 3) Stopping the legitimization of secession through all political and cultural means both inside and abroad. 4) Pursue legal avenues. A good example is Serbia's referral of Kosovo's case to International Court of Justice (Ker-Lindsay, 2018, p.85-89)

The literature does not uniformly support the position that home states are always at an advantage. In some cases, secessionist movements survive and gain partial recognition through the help of a patron state. Taiwan, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and Nagorno-Karabakh managed to reach de facto status with the help and support of the United States, Turkey, and Armenia, respectively. Patron states' support for secessionist states varies case by case and the reasons behind each case differ as well. Sometimes patron states regard secessionist entities as political instruments to bolster their power in the region, exert pressure over the parent

state, and generally support by a patron state is grounded in national interests of the recognizer and or the patron state (Berg and Toomla, 2009; Kolstø, 2007).

Does regime type of a recognizer state matter when invoking the issue of international recognition? A major categorization of regime type is dividing states into democracies and non-democracies. The Democratic Peace Theory posits that democracies rarely go to war with one another and are generally cooperative with one another. The relationship between regime types and the Democratic Peace Theory and its effect on recognition decision is discussed in the following section.

Democratic peace theory

The literature on democratic peace theory focuses on the role of political regime types in explaining international events; more generally that jointly democratic dyads are more cooperative and less bellicose compared to mixed dyads or jointly nondemocratic dyads (Belnager et al., 2005, p. 438). Political regimes and democratic peace are important variables in studying states' behavior. Despite voluminous literature on democratic peace, there is little work specifically focusing on the application of the democratic peace in foreign states intervention in secessionist conflict and recognition of aspirant states. Thus, applying the logic to recognition of aspirant states can provide significant insights about the dynamic of international recognition and expansion of the democratic peace explanatory power.

The United States and other democracies are shown to be reluctant in extending recognition to secessionist states emerging from democratic states and are particularly careful in cases where secession emerges from autocratic states. There is no autocratic counterpart to this argument. Extension of recognition to aspirant states by autocratic states is dependent upon the

decision of the leaders and the states' geo-strategic interests. In other words, nondemocratic states, for the most part, are driven by the pursuit of national interests and do not consider regime type when determining whether to provide recognition for an aspirant state. These states, unlike democracies, are less constraint in their international behavior (Belanger, Duchesen and Paquin, 2005; Sideman, Dougherty, and Jenne, 2005). Empirical studies aimed at testing the realist and liberal perspectives regarding states' behavior towards aspirant states demonstrate that the realist arguments pointing to the national interests of states play a significant role in recognition of aspirant states. However, the international system and its democratic major powers appreciate democracy in aspirant states, especially since the end of the Cold War and, thus, are likely or expected to confer recognition to aspirant states that are more democratic (Caspersen, 2008).

Ozpek (2014) conducted a comparative analysis of democratic and nondemocratic major powers' policy towards de facto states. He concluded that the national interest argument, grounded in realism, better explained why major powers recognized some of the de facto states, not regime type. Following the end of the Cold War and the ascension of the United States as hegemon of the international system, a new norm in the international system has taken place where the emphasis on democratic standards is new (Ryngaert and Sobrie 2011). Both the aspirant states and their home states, conscious of the emphasis on democratization in the international system, have engaged in democratization. Because democracy is seen as a principal element in gaining international recognition. Some home states adopt the strategy of democratization to delegitimize the seceding regions' attempts for independence and separate statehood while the aspirant states use democratization for their ambitions of full statehood and international recognition (Caspersen, 2015).

Following Kosovo's recognition by the Western democracies, several other aspirant states—including Somaliland, Abkhazia, and Palestine—have attempted to attract international recognition through “democratization-for-recognition strategy” (Baar et al, 2016, p.89). A select number of aspirant states in recent decades have focused on creating effective governments and democratic institutions as well as an emphasis on and invocation of the right of self-determination in their interaction with the outside world. Scharf (2003, p.374) calls this new approach “strategy of earned sovereignty”. Moreover, the democratic peace theory, based on the “Kantian” (Kacowicz; 1998, p.41) three-part hypothesis, democracy - international organizations - international trade, relies on the externalization of liberal norms in the international relations of countries governed through a liberal democratic framework (Rosato; 2003, p.586). There are several suppositions made based on the democratic peace theory. First, based on the “monadic democratic peace” argument (Stockemer, 2008, p.7), democracies are more peaceful and cooperative in their relations with all other states in the system. Second, based on the “dyadic democratic peace” (Lin, 2014, p.348) argument, democracies are more peaceful only in their relations with other democracies. Third, systemic democratic peace, which maintains that the more democracies there are in a region or the international system, the more peaceful the region or the international system, will be. Therefore, according to the democratic peace argument, democratic governments, supposedly and in theory, are more inclined to cooperate with similar regimes, while nondemocratic regimes may not have to follow similar behavior patterns. However, some scholars doubt the existence of any significant relationship between democracy and peace (Layne, 1994; Rosato, 2003). Nonetheless, the relationship between democratic and nondemocratic states and recognition of aspirant states is worth examining.

Despite the emphasis on democratization among aspirant and home states, there is no systematic study focusing on the relationship between regime type, democratization, and recognition. Ozpek (2014) analyzed the relationship between regime type of great powers and de facto states, but his study was limited to de facto states and great powers only. Therefore, a study focusing on the relationship between recognition by all states and democratization among aspirant and home states can contribute to literature. The next section provides a discussion of cultural and identity politics and their relationship with recognition decisions.

Religion

Many variables explaining the recognition decisions of small and big powers focus on geostrategic, security, stability, and general national interest of states grounded in the realism tradition. However, it is important to examine alternative explanations of a state's behavior in international relations such as identity politics. The international recognition, as evident from the existing literature, is dominated by power politics. However, there is a growing literature on the important influence of culture and identity, specifically religion and ethnic ties, in international politics (Gill, 2001). Religion and religious institutions affect the behavior patterns of states in the international arena, especially issues of peace and conflict (Fox and Sandler, 2004; Sandal and James, 2010). There are numerous studies focusing on the relationship between religion, democracy, economic issues, women and human rights, armed conflicts, civil wars, peace, and security at the domestic level of states (Buckley and Mantilla, 2013; Juergensmeyer, 2000; McCleary and Barro, 2006; Sarkissian, 2015; Warner, 2000).

Although there is a growing literature concerning religion and religious institutions and their effect on domestic politics, the implications of religion and religious institutions in international policy outcome is not extensively explored. Henne (2013) maintains that countries,

which regulate and incorporate religion in their policies, are more likely to support international resolutions that condemn religious defamation. Nilsson (2012) argues that international peace agreements where religious institutions are involved have a longer durability. A cross-national study showed that a correlation existed between religion and the way relationships were formed between some countries involved in conflict and security challenges (Vullers, Pfeiffer, and Basedau, 2015). The single most important work examining the relationship between religion and states' decision to extend or withhold recognition to aspirant states is by Mirilovic and Siroky (2015, 2016). Their comparative case studies of Kosovo, Palestine, and Israel demonstrate that there is a correlation and causation between religion and states' decisions regarding recognition of aspirant states. They focus on two "mechanisms; one at the domestic level through religious institutions and one at the international level through religious affinities" (Mirilovic and Siroky, 2015, p.263). However, additional research in this area can further explore variation across time and explain the timing and the dynamics of recognition decisions.

Ethnic ties and kinship can influence recognition of aspirant states. States who see the aspirant states' population "as more self-like will be deemed more deserving of recognition and external sovereignty (Coggins, 2014, p.143). Onuha (2012) argues that statesmen who share similar ethnic identity with secessionist movements have demonstrated a willingness to support the separatists' ambition for statehood. O'Loughlin and Kolossov (2002) examined public opinion surveys among Slavic countries. They conclude that people in Russia and other Slavic states strongly supported ethnic and Orthodox Christian Serbs and their nationalistic quests in the Balkans. They also found a relatively stronger empathy towards Serbs and the populations of South Ossetia and Abkhazia among the Slavic states.

The ethnic based support by Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan is evident in Nagorno-Karabakh and Cyprus. Azerbaijan and Armenia's support to groups in Nagorno-Karabakh is divided along ethnic lines (Souleimanov, 2013). There is a consensus that when all other variables are equal the leadership of a country sharing ethnic ties to a group contesting territorial sovereignty, the kin-country will support the group with whom it shares ethnic identity (Byman et al, 2001; Richmond, 2006; Weingast, 1995). Moreover, Constructivists, building on in-group and out-group principles of social psychology, argue that polities with shared identities that see each other more self-like are cooperative and sympathetic with one another. Thus, aspirant states are more likely to gain recognition and external support from states with shared sense of identity, especially their co-religionists and co-ethnic groups (Beyer, 2016; Druckman, 1994; Gubler and Gong, 2009; Mercer, 1995). Religion is the last of the major explanations behind recognition decisions. The proceeding conclusion provides a synthetization of the findings and places them into context for hypothesis development and subsequent research objectives and design.

Literature Review Summary

The literature identifies two categories of factors behind states' recognition decisions. First, the international or systemic level, which can be divided into two groups of factors. One, the normative and legal group which includes the international law, norms, and to a degree, doctrines. Second, the political factors including external security environment, geostrategic and foreign policy objectives of states, regime type, and identity politics. The second category of factors are at the domestic level of states. This includes security, national politics, the role of interest groups on foreign policy, and identity politics that is bidirectional as it has both an international and national level dimension.

The international legal aspect of recognition is debated between two camps: the declaratory and constitutive theories for statehood. The two norms of territorial integrity and self-determination are ambiguous and in a debated status. The former emphasis on sovereignty and unchangeable borders of states, while the latter, self-determination, advocates the right of people to decide their political destiny and obliges the international community to assist such efforts. The prevalent recognition doctrines are policy driven and have not proved consequential in setting up some universal principles upon which states would make their recognition decisions. They do not draw clear distinction between recognition of states versus governments. Almost all scholars, as evident in the literature review, agree that international factors behind recognition decisions are driven by their national interests. States either ignore provisions of the international law, norms, doctrines, and principles or bend them in favor of their decisions that are based, for the most part, on the political realities and national interests.

The domestic level factors namely national politics, domestic security, identity politics, and the role of interest groups in relationship with international recognition is less explored and case specific. As Crawford (1996, 1995) showed, national politics outweigh external factors and impact foreign policy choices including international recognition when the issue is either less important, the international system lacks clear principles on the issue, or the decision will not create controversy. Most importantly, national politics influence foreign policy decisions when the issue at hand is not a threat to national security.

According to the conventional wisdom in international relations, power politics grounded in national interests and self-preservation take precedence over identity and idealistic factors. Recognition decision is not exempt from this line of argument. However, international recognition has not been systematically studied or theorized. Coggins's (2011, 2014) study of

recognition of aspirant states focused on the role of great powers. Crawford (1995, 1996) studied the unilateral recognition of former USSR states. Mirilovic and Siroky (2014, 2015) studied the link between religion and international recognition in the cases of Palestine and Kosovo. Ozpek (2014) studied the relationship between recognition and regime type. His study like Coggins focused only on great powers. The vulnerability variable focusing on states with separatist movements of their own has not been fully tested. Coggins's (2011, 2014) test of the theory was only limited to great powers and the results, when isolated from other variables, are inconclusive. Other scholars are also dubious of its explanatory power. In sum, the literature provides several explanations for international recognition of aspirant states such as national interests, national politics, the role of great powers, international law, norms, doctrines, interest groups and political parties, identity relations, theory of vulnerability, and regime type. Scholars have studied recognition of some single or multiple cases and focused on a limited number of recognizers, the great powers for example, and their explanations are specific to each case.

There are two weaknesses or under-researched areas in the literature. One, the research on recognition of aspirant states is case specific or limited to a select number of recognizers. Recognition is not theorized or studied in a systematic way where a general pattern of behavior could be drawn to explain recognition by all states in the system. Second, the literature focuses on the classic power-politics explanations grounded in the national interests and the realist tradition. Some variables are under researched. The theory of vulnerability, the identity politics, and the role of regime type in recognition decisions is ambiguous because it is understudied, case specific, or debated. It is for these reasons, that this research will study these three variables. The variables will be analyzed through a theoretical framework and create relevant hypotheses in the subsequent section.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This subsection includes hypotheses and the adoption of relevant theoretical framework for the three variables selected in the preceding section. Establishing a connection between the independent variables and the existing IR theories delivers two things. First, it serves as a guide on which to build and structure the main arguments of this thesis. Second, positioning and the main arguments within the relevant theories provides an opportunity to assess which IR theory best describes recognition decision among states.

The first variable is the vulnerability proposition that posits states vulnerable to domestic separatist movements are unlikely to recognize an aspirant state. The second variable examines the linkage between regime type of the recognizer, aspirant, and home states and recognition decisions. Democracies are more likely to recognize an aspirant state that is more democratic than its parent or home state. However, democracies are less likely to recognize an aspirant state when the home state is more democratic than the aspirant state. The last variable examines if religious similarities and differences between the recognizer, aspirant, and home states affect recognition. States are likely to recognize an aspirant state when both the recognizer and aspirant adhere to the same religion and the home state's majority population practices a religion different from the aspirant and recognizer states. If it is the opposite situation, recognizer is less likely to recognize the aspirant state. Each of the three variables are placed within the relevant theoretical framework followed by proposed hypotheses starting with the vulnerability proposition.

The vulnerability proposition

States that have a domestic separatist or secessionist movement of their own do not support similar movements abroad and are naturally inhibited to recognize aspirant states. This argument is referred to as the “vulnerability proposition” by Sideman (2001). Other scholars refer to the argument simply as vulnerability or the vulnerability argument. Mirilovic and Siroky (2014, 2015) termed it “the vulnerability theory”. Several scholars studying secession in the African regional context argue that because of the vulnerability factor states refrained from intervening in domestic affairs of other countries and especially when the issue of secession was at stake (Herbst, 1989; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Cervenka, 1969). The logic of vulnerability explains why some states, Spain for example, avoid recognition of Palestinian and Kosovar states (Hill and Jewett, 1994). Recognition of an aspirant state by such a state emboldens domestic separatist movements and legitimizes their claims. It is a threat to domestic security and can potentially lead to territorial disintegration of the recognizer. The vulnerability argument suggests that states vulnerable to secession are more likely to support home states and oppose aspirant states (Ayoob, 1995; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Herbst, 1989; Touval, 1972).

The vulnerability argument reflects the worldview of political realism in international relations (IR). Realism operates under a few basic assumptions that are key in understanding the behavior of states in international politics. First, states are the most important and principle actors. Realists believe states, possessing the monopoly of legitimate force and sovereignty, are able to resolve conflicts between groups and individuals within its territory as well as other states and international actors, are the principle actors in the international system (Waltz, 1979). Realists acknowledge the importance of non-state actors like the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Multinational Corporation, but consider them as secondary actors. Second,

state is viewed as a unitary actor (Keohane, 1986, p.64). Realists posit that national interests trump domestic differences and that government of a state speak with one voice for the state as whole. Thus, for realist, a country faces the outside world as an integrated unit. Third, decision makers are rational (Mearsheimer, 1994, p.10). States are goal oriented and their goals are consisted. States, when necessary, engaged in cost-benefit analysis, consider every alternative, and choose the option that maximize their benefit. Thus, states change their strategies and behavior to maximize their national interests. Fourth, the international system is anarchic. States coexist in a context of international anarchy where each state has to survive on its own (Mearsheimer, 1994, p.10). Since there is no centralized authority or government to provide protection or enforce laws. Thus, states are by definition self-help-agents.

Realism in the broadest terms is divided into two categories; classical or traditional realism and neorealism. There are other narrower subsets to each of the two. However, for the purpose of this study it is sufficient to briefly introduce the two major categories. Among the key proponents of traditional or classic realism are Edward Hallett Carr and Hans Morgenthau. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, first published in 1939, is a cornerstone of realism in the twentieth century. Morgenthau's *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* is another foundational work in traditional realism. Morgenthau (1946) developed a comprehensive international theory of realism. The six principles of Morgenthau (1954) further systemized realism in international relations.

The traditional classical realism was further developed into a more methodologically rigorous approach to theorizing about international affairs. Neorealism or structural realism introduced by Kenneth Waltz (1979) remains a more modern rendition of the theory that focuses primarily on the effects of the structure of international system. In Waltz's conceptualization,

two elements are essential: 1) the international system's ordering principle is anarchy, a lack of central government or authority, which leads to a self-help system made up of autonomous states; 2) distribution of capabilities or power. These two aspects of the system determine how states behave.

Despite their similarities, four differences between classical realism and neorealism are noteworthy. First, Classical realists find the sources of conflict and war in human nature while neo-realists identify the sources to be the anarchic system of the international system. Second, Classical realists consider state to be above the system while neo-realists weigh in on the agency of the system (Hosson, 2000). Third, Classical realists differentiate between status-quo powers while neo-realists consider states as unitary actors (Schweller, 1996, p.155). Last, unlike classical realists, neo-realists adopt a more rigorous approach to international politics influenced by the behaviorist revolution of 1960s (George and Sorensen, 2007, p.75).

Realism, regardless of its nuanced subcategories, emphasizes the state to be the principle actor in IR, which is primarily motivated by its national interests in its foreign policy and international behavior. The central premise of realism is self-preservation, national security, and power politics. All nation-states are motivated by national interests, or, at best, national interests disguised as moral concerns. At its most fundamental level, the national interest is generic and easy to define: all states seek to preserve their political autonomy and their territorial integrity (Wendt, 2007).

The above introduction of political realism in IR shows that national interest and more specifically national security are central issues for the realist worldview. The vulnerability proposition can be best positioned in the theoretical framework of realism. Realism emphasizes states' "preservation or 'security' of the self (Wendt, 2007, p.339) in the international system.

Thus, a state vulnerable to separatist movement will not recognize another similar movement abroad. Such a move endangers its own national security and territorial integrity.

Though the vulnerability argument is parsimonious and straightforward, it does not fully explain the recognition decisions of vulnerable states or their support for secessionist movements abroad. Heraclides (1990) argues that multiethnic states vulnerable to domestic separatism are not inhibited from recognizing secessionist movements abroad. Sideman (1997; 2001) also maintains that empirical support for vulnerability propositions is weak. Sideman (1997) argues that states with secessionist problems of their own have supported and recognized aspirant states, and that the vulnerability argument has not led states to follow consistent policies towards aspirant states. For example, United Kingdom and France, who have experienced some separatism, supported Yugoslavia's integrity, but quickly accepted various plans to partition Bosnia. Serbia despite its vulnerability to secession supported the separatist efforts of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Moreover, Russia has backed Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs despite its secessionist conflict in Chechnya (Nichol, 2008; Popescu, 2006; Lewis, 2002, Laitan and Samatar, 1987). Coggins (2011, 2014) applied the vulnerability argument in her analysis of recognition by great powers. Her results, limited to great powers, had mixed or inconclusive results.

Validity and explanatory power of the vulnerability proposition is contested and does not lead states to avoid adopting a consistent foreign policy towards aspirant states. The vulnerability argument and its contested status in the literature leads to the following hypothesis:

- *H1: States with separatist challenges of their own are less likely to recognize aspirant states.*

The second set of hypotheses investigates the recognition decision based on regime type. As previously state, based on the Democratic Peace Theory, democracies are more likely to

recognize an aspirant state that is more democratic compared to its parent state. The hypotheses created based on this explanation follows as below.

Regime type: the role of democracy in recognition

Evaluating the role of political regime type in recognition of aspirant states is built on two broad groups of factors. First, the democratic peace theory and the alignment choices of states during interstate militarized disputes. The Democratic Peace Theory (DPT) is one of the main contributions of the liberalism paradigm to IR. DPT posits that democracies cooperate with one another and rarely go to war with one another for two reasons. First, democracies are restrained by domestic factors. Second, democracies see one another as legitimate and non-threatening. Therefore, they cooperate with other democratic states more than nondemocracies and are supportive of democratic movements globally. They generally favor expansion of democratic regimes (Shapiro, 2011). This cooperative nature among democracies and the overall promotion of democratization globally is sometimes referred to as “democratic solidarity” (Cooper and Legler, 2001; Niedererger, 2013). DPT is a sub-field of the Liberalism paradigm in IR. As such, the paradigm is introduced in the following subsection.

The Liberalism paradigm and its approach to the study of international politics entered academia following World War I. The origins of modern liberal approach to IR can be traced back to thinkers and philosophers such as Adam Smith, John Locke, Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, and others. Kant’s essay *Perpetual Peace* (1795) proposes a few conditions that will ensure global peace, cooperation, prosperity, and security among states. These include international institutions or a “federation of free states”, international law and norms and economic interdependence and free trade or “universal hospitality”, and the democratic peace theory or in

Kant's words "republican constitutions" (Ossipow, 2008, p.357-375). These elements became dominant themes for the different versions of liberal theories in IR following World War II. The liberal IR theories are diverse, however they all share a few basic assumptions. 1) Liberalism agrees with realism that states are the primary actors in the international system, but they are not the only actors. States are not unitary as domestic politics matter too. 2) There are factors other than capabilities that influence and constraint behavior of states. 3) States' interests are diverse and evolve over time (Jahn, 2013). The liberal theories of IR are generally characterized by their optimistic view about creation of prosperity and a peaceful global environment through strong international institutions and international law despite anarchy in the system. Though states are considered the primary actors in an anarchic environment of the system, interstate conflict can be mitigated through cooperation, international institutions, free trade, and promotion of democratic values.

Morvacik (1997) has reformulated the liberal IR theory into a "nonideological and nonutopian form appropriate to empirical social science" (Morvacik, 1997, p.1), which includes a socio-scientifically rigorous manner. The basic premise of the liberal IR theory is "that the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational society in which they are embedded critically shapes state behavior by influencing the social purposes underlying state preferences" (Marvacik, 1997, p.516). This fundamental premise is built upon three core assumptions which are "1) The Primacy of Societal Actors: The fundamental actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, who are on the average rational and risk-averse" manner. 2) Representation and State Preferences States (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics. 3) Interdependence and the International

System: The configuration of interdependent state preferences determines state behavior” (1997, p.515-520). In view of these assumptions, he argues there are three mainstream types of IR liberal theories: “Ideational liberalism stresses the impact on state behavior of conflict and compatibility among collective social values or identities concerning the scope and nature of public goods provision. Commercial liberalism stresses the impact on state behavior of gains and losses to individuals and groups in society from transnational economic interchange. Republican liberalism stresses the impact on state behavior of varying forms of domestic representation and the resulting incentives for social groups to engage in rent seeking” (Morvacik, 1997, p.515).

As explained above, DPT and alliance choices of states serve as the main reasons for studying the relationship between regime type and recognition decisions. Werner and Lemke (1997) evaluated the alignment decisions of democratic and autocratic states during “militarized interstate disputes between 1816 and 1986” (Werner and Lemke, 1997, p.530). Their findings show that states sharing similar political regimes align with one another during international conflicts. Other key points of their conclusion are interesting as they set the stage for future research. They conclude that:

[A] relationship exists between alignment behavior in international disputes and differences in political and economic institutions... this relationship persists regardless of whether the aligning state is democratic or autocratic. The empirical evidence also suggests that the power of each disputing side is important to some aligning states, but not to others. In particular, autocratic aligning states are far more likely to align with a side as its power grows, whereas democratic aligning states are not systematically influenced by power considerations. Finally, the data provide confounding information regarding the effect of alliance commitments on alignment behavior. Whereas the

alignment choices of democracies are not affected by alliance commitments, such promises do affect autocratic alignment behavior... These results suggest interesting implications for research on the democratic peace, the determinants of threat in the international system, and the impact of selection effects. (p.529-543).

Furthermore, as reported in the literature review, both aspirant and home states use democratization as a strategy to influence third states' behavior towards themselves. Some aspirant states, for instance Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Somaliland, Kosovo, and Palestine, have adopted "democratization-for-recognition strategy" (Baar et al, 2016, p.89) to campaign for their international recognition, full statehood, and membership in the UN. Similarly, home states engage in democratization to gain favor with other democratic states and delegitimize aspirant states' claim for statehood. Laurence Broers (2005, p.71) argues that both home and aspirant states engage in "competitive democratization" to influence international recognition by demonstrating that they are more democratic than the other. Kosovo's recognition by Western democracies has encouraged other aspirant states to attract international recognition through "democratization-for-recognition strategy" (Baar et al, 2016, p.89). Both the aspirant and home states have focused on creating effective governments and democratic institutions as well as an emphasis on the right of self-determination in their interaction with the outside world. Scharf (2003, p.374) calls this new approach "strategy of earned sovereignty". Based on the Kantian traditions and the DPT, democracies are arguably more inclined to recognize a democratic aspirant state. The discussion of DPT, the democratic solidarity, the alliance decision of states based on political regime, democratization for recognition strategy, competitive democratization, and strategy of earned sovereignty, lead to the following hypotheses:

- *H2: Democratic states are more likely to recognize an aspirant state when the aspirant state is more democratic than the home state.*
- *H3: Democratic states are less likely to recognize an aspirant state when the home state is more democratic than the aspirant state.*

The last variable selected for investigation in this research is the relationship between identity politics and recognition decisions. The subsection below includes hypotheses based on religious affinities and their placement within their relevant theoretical framework.

Identity politics: religion and recognition

The influence of religion has received little attention in IR. Some IR scholars, proponents of liberalism and realism, overlook religion and other identity factors, like ethnicity, to provide some parsimonious explanations for world politics. Whenever religion has been addressed, it is referred to in a bigger context of civilizations, organizations, institutions, and society at large. Religion was considered to have an insignificant role or marginal influence in the policies of the USA and USSR during the cold war era, theories of IR mainly focused on power politics and balance of power. Thus, unlike sociology, political science and other disciplines, religion has had minor reflection in IR (Carment and James, 1997; Nukhet, 2011; Oliver, 1999).

The secularization theory pushed religion as a private matter where it would not be considered an important variable in the public arena. This notion coalesced, at least among the secularized academia, to the “demystification of religion inherent in the classic secularization paradigm posits a gradual, persistent, unbroken erosion of religious influence in urban industrial societies” (Shupe, 1990, p.19). Casanova (2001) also believes one reason religion has not been incorporated into IR is the secular nature of the discipline where three assumptions played a significant role: the proliferation of rationality, secularity, and modernity. Casanova (2011)

revaluates these assumptions and argues that religion has reemerged as a major force in global politics, especially after the end of the Cold War. Desch (2013) also agrees that religion has been an overlooked variable in IR because of the persistent power of secularization thesis. He maintains religion is resurfacing in IR and considers three waves of such a reappearance. First, “religion’s residual legacy in secular international relation” that denotes even very secularist notions which are reinforced by past or current religions experiences. He elaborates this has a larger implication for IR as the most secular states and statesmen will favor states and movements that closely resembled the religious and cultural fabric of their states and societies. Second, “causes and consequences of the global resurgence of religion in terms of the numerical spread of belief and the greater incidence of religiously motivated events” globally. Third, the “conceptual aspect of the resurgence of religion: the growing challenge to the notion that religion is a distinct social element that can be separated from the other factors shaping global politics” (Desch, 2013, p.16). The proliferation of religiously motivated international political events is leading to a “gradual decline of secularism in international relations” (Desch, 2013, p.40). Other scholars also point out the important role of religion in IR yet express concern about the marginal attention it receives in the larger field of IR. Shah notes that “religion has become one of the most influential factors in world affairs in the last generation but remains one of the least examined factors in the professional study and practice of world affairs” (Shah et al. 2012, p.3). Some scholars have pushed back against the western-centric and secular nature of IR and started to consider religion and other identity related factors.

Although, religion has never been completely absent from the study of international politics. As Fox argues, IR scholars have been “blinded by their secular paradigms to pay attention to it” (Fox, 2009, p. 276), especially before the end of the Cold War. In the decades

following the Cold War era, the study of religion and international relations has increased drastically. Berger (1999) argues that the secularization thesis needs reconsideration as religion is not on the decline and its role in international politics needs rigorous study. Esposito (1999) points to the growing international security issues related to Islam and advocated inclusion of religion as an important variable in IR. Gill (2001) maintains that ignoring religion in IR is a serious problem for two reasons. First, religion and religious organizations are deeply rooted in nations. Ignoring such an ingrained part of a nation results in miscalculation of global politics. Second, religious beliefs are key elements in understanding political participation, international conflict, and cooperation. Kabalkova (2000, 2003) even proposed the creation of a new subfield in IR called “International Political Theology” (IPT). She maintains that scholars of IR made a correction when “International Political Economy” (IPE) was added to the field to account for the neglect of economic factors in the IR discipline. The post-secular IR scholarship needs to take the roles of religion, ideals, ideologies, and culture to better explain global politics. Kabalkova (2000, p. 708) concludes that “Gilpin’s famous dictum about IPE to the effect that IR is about power and wealth, I add that IR in the contemporary world with its ever-increasing global stakes is not only about power and wealth but perhaps even more so about values and the meaning of the very human existence. Hence IPT.”

Fox (2001) identifies three ways religion influences global politics. First, religion influences the decision-making process. Religion is part of people’s worldview and decision makers are not exempted from it. Religion influences how decision makers view events and perceive them and ultimately make decisions in view of their evaluation of global politics. Second, religion is a source of legitimacy. Governments and statesmen uses religion to justify their legitimacy and pander to their base when making decision in international politics. Third,

religion is an international issue and thus pertinent to IR. Religion has never been a domestic issue due to its transnational dimension. Religious and ethnoreligious conflicts have a prominent international aspect. Their implications usually involve cross-border and transitional actors (Fox, 2001, p.59-66). Fox and Sandler (2010) further refined influences of religion in IR four ways. First, religion influences statesmen and leaders through shaping their worldviews, behavior, and thoughts. Second, religion is a key element in formation of identity. Third, as previously stated, religion is a source of legitimacy both at the national and international levels. Fourth, religion is associated with international intuitions that can influence political process, for instance the Catholic Church and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation.

Hurd (2007) shows, through a case study of Turkey, how religion has resurged following the failure of secular autocratic regimes throughout the world, and how religion influences and shapes inter-state relations. Religion is a powerful tool in shaping foreign policy of states. It can be invoked to gain support of domestic constituents, influence international actors and institutions. Alternatively, religion can be used to oppose international politics related issues as religion is a bidirectional source both a “bearer of peace *and* the sword” (Appleby, 2000, p.20).

Religion is no longer a backburner variable in IR. However, it has not been theorized nor incorporated to a single theory. Kabalkova’s (2000, 2003) IPT has not satisfied the theorization of religion in IR. Sandal and James (2011) propose that religion can be incorporated to the major IR theories “without stretching the limits of theories or disturbing their intellectual coherence, it is quite possible to see possibilities for two-way interactions between the frameworks and identity-related variables like religion” (Sandal and James, 2011, p.18).

They propose religion can be incorporated with classical realism as the sub-state account of the theory’s explanation of international politics by focusing “on human nature, the flexible

definition of rationality, interest and power as well as the widely used terminology of emotions and cognition allow for integration of studies of belief systems and worldviews, over which religion has significant influence”. Structural realism can adopt religion as a variable in the contemporary model of foreign policy. Neoliberalism can incorporate religion into its framework as it focuses on transnational institutions, creation of norms and regimes (Sandal and James, 2011, p.18-20).

The intersectionality of religion in different disciplines and its local, national, and transnational dimension makes it hard to fit a single theory. However, the constructivism theory or ontology seems the most suitable theoretical framework to study religion in IR. Several scholars, considering religion to be an ideational factor, propose constructivism as the appropriate theoretical avenue for religion in the field of IR (Barnett, 2011; Bellin, 2012; Hurd, 2011; Fox, 2004; Sandal and James, 2010).

Constructivist theory of IR emphasizes the state interests in terms of ideas and social interaction. Constructivism includes a set of theories that focuses on social construction of actors, events, institutions, and social relationships between actors rather than exclusively material realities. Wendt defines two principles of constructivism: “(1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature” (Wendt, 1999, p.1). He further elaborates that states in the international system view one another as friend, enemies, or rivals based on their social interaction and in consideration of their own beliefs, identities, shared understanding, and practices about themselves and others in the system. Constructivism has a wider application in several

disciplines. However, one theory of constructivism in IR under discussion in this study is the conceptualization presented by Wendt (1994):

Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective, rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics. (P.385).

Hurd (2008) maintains that there are four distinguishing features of constructivism. First, Constructivism proposes an alternative to materialism where “in a socially constructed world, the existence of patterns, cause-and effect relationships, and even states themselves depends on webs of meaning and practices that constitute them” (Hurd, 2008, p.300). This is reinforced by Wendt who argues that “a fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them” (Wendt, 1992, p.396-397). The second feature is the construction of states interest. Constructivists do not deny the materialist basis of state interest. However, they argue the interpretation of the material capabilities matters most. For instance, the hostility of “North Korean missiles shows that American leaders respond to the social relationship between the USA and the military resources of others, friend or enemy, rather than to the hardware itself” (Hurd, 2008, p.302). Legro further explains that “new foreign policy ideas are shaped by preexisting dominant ideas and their relationship to experienced events” (Legro, 2005, p.4). The third feature is mutual constitution of structures and agents. Norms and practices in international system are products of state actions and influences upon other states. Thus, “the idea that states and the

international environment are mutually constituted” (Hurd, 2008, p.304). The fourth feature of constructivism is its multiple logics of anarchy. The multiplicity of anarchy is based on the three cultures of anarchy prescribed by Wendt (1992), based on the philosophical views of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant, characterized respectively by “enmity,” “rivalry,” and “friendship” (Wendt 1992, p. 391-425).

Although constructivism, as reviewed so far, does not explicitly maintain that religion shapes identities of states, a case can be made that religion is best reflected in the constructivist paradigm of IR. Religion and religious beliefs shape the personality and worldview of leaders and is ingrained in the national identity of states. According to the constructivism tradition, states perceive one another as enemy, friend, or rival based on their social instruction. Previous knowledge or shared values and beliefs are essential in making judgments among states and formulating foreign policies. Some scholars incorporate religion and argue that the in-group and out-group formation of identity found in “Social Identity Theory” is applicable in IR under the broader constructivist paradigm. Statesmen and leaders exhibit a desire to cooperate with their coreligionist states, institutions, movements, and belligerency. This is true for states that are not theocracies or where religion does not heavily influence political process (Abdelal et al., 2006; Acharya, 2000; Albert et al., 2001).

The scholarship surrounding the significant role of religion in IR, especially after the end of Cold War, is growing. However, its role in recognition of aspirant states is under-researched. States can recognize an aspirant state dependent on inter-group identity relations. As reported in the literature review, the identity-based relationships between the aspirant, recognizer, and home states can potentially affect international recognition. This perspective derives from the constructivist conception of shared ideas, beliefs, identity, and cultural values in international

relations and their effect on states' behavior. Security interests often are considered the material explanations for state behavior. However, non-material and identity relations can influence change in international relations because they empower actors through discourse and shape identities, which determine individual and state interests (Giddens, 1984).

The constructivist perspective and the role of identity relations might explain recognition of aspirant states. This research uses religion to measure identity relations for two reasons. First, the chances of similar religion between aspirant, home, and the recognizer state is higher while it is lower for ethnic ties, except states that are in vicinity of the aspirant states (Coggins, 2014). Moreover, some scholars, drawing on the relationship between of religion with democracy, economic issues, women and human rights, peace, and security at the domestic level of states, analyzed international relations through an inside-out perspective where domestic politics affect foreign policy (Buckley and Mantilla, 2013; Juergensmeyer, 2000; McCleary and Barro, 2006; Sarkissian, 2015; Warner, 2000). Second, the comparative case studies of Kosovo, Palestine, and Israel (Mirilovic and Siroky 2015; 2016) demonstrate the existence of a correlation and causation between religion and recognition. Their study was limited only to three countries. This project will examine the relationship between recognition and religious identity across all existing members of the UN.

The relationship between religion and recognition leads to the following hypotheses:

- *H5: Aspirant states are more likely to gain recognition when aspirant and recognizer states have similar religion.*
- *H6: Aspirant states are less likely to gain recognition when the home state and the recognizer states have the same religion.*

Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of the existing literature on aspirant states and their international recognition. The chapter was divided into several subsections for clarity and organization. The definition and terminology section addressed the controversy over terms and definitions. After comparing and contrasting several definitions and terms, aspirant state was selected as an appropriate term and a working definition was established. The different approaches and understanding of the practice of international recognition was evaluated. A definition of the recognition capturing major conceptualizations by a majority of scholars was adopted for this thesis.

The motivations and reasons behind recognition decisions were reviewed. The literature identified the major factors that repeatedly emerged in the scholarship on the topic. The existing literature identifies a number of variables that influences recognition decisions. These include international law and normative explanations, system level explanations, domestic and national politics of the states, the role played by the home or parent states, the regime type of the states, and identity politics. An analysis of the literature showed that identity politics, regime type, and vulnerability – states facing their own separatist movements – were the less explored and under-researched areas. These three variables are selected for further investigation. The studies that included these variables produced inconclusive results and or were case specific. The hypotheses and theoretical framework subsection of the literature review included generation of hypotheses for the selected variables. This section also outlined the suitable theoretical parameters placing the variables and hypotheses within the framework of relevant IR theories. The next chapter is about research design. It will present operationalization of the main variables, data sources, and methodological steps that will facilitate the hypothesis testing.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in this study. It defines the research questions and objectives of the study. The dependent, independent, and control variables are described and operationally defined. The chapter also provides information about the data sources, data collection techniques, and the statistical method employed to test the hypotheses. Though the ten cases selected for this study are identified in the discussion of conceptual definition subsection of the literature review, the case selection methods and techniques are discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter ends with providing background information about each of the ten cases.

Delimitation and Research Question

This research is primarily concerned with identifying and evaluating the factors, motivations, and reasons behind states' recognition decisions. Specifically, this thesis focuses on international recognition of aspirant states. The primary research question guiding this thesis is: *what factors explain recognition of aspirant states by the existing member states of the international community?* There are three secondary research questions that are in line with three groups of hypotheses. One, do states that are domestically vulnerable to secession recognize aspirant states? Two, do democratic and free countries recognize aspirant states that are comparatively more democratic than their home/parent states? Three, does religion shape states' recognition decision? There are several potential factors behind recognition decisions. This study

explores three broad categories of factors. First, the vulnerability of states facing internal separatist movements, thereafter labeled as ‘vulnerability’. Second, the relationship between regime type and recognition, which will be referred to as ‘regime type’ for the remainder of this research. Third, the relationship between religion and recognition decisions, shortened to ‘religion’. The unit of analysis is the country level recognition decisions, specifically recognition of an aspirant state by a sovereign state. Thus, the spatial domain is limited to states that are members of the UN. The sovereign UN member state, for the purpose of this study, is labeled as ‘the recognizer’. The temporal range of the spatial units, UN member states, is the year 2011. Recognition is a changeable practice. States can withdraw, freeze, or suspend recognition. For example, several countries withdrew, suspended, or even froze recognition of the Western Sahara over the past few decades. Another example is Taiwan and China--several countries withdrew their recognition of Taiwan or switched their diplomatic relationship to the Peoples’ Republic of China. Thus, though the temporal range is restricted to 2011, it includes recognitions that precede 2011 and are not withdrawn or frozen by 2011. Due to unavailability of data, the temporal range does not extend beyond 2011. This study uses existing data, found in the literature and existing databases, and thus does not include generation of an original dataset. The existing data is restructured and reconfigured for this research. The restrictive temporal range isolates and excludes the states that emerged after the implosion of the USSR in 1991-1992 from this research. The latter is excluded because some of the former Soviet republics were sovereign states before their incorporation into the USSR. Some of these states, the central Asian countries for instance, did not face major challenges in achieving widespread recognition and admission to the UN. Another group of former USSR republics are the Baltic States. The circumstances surrounding their recognition are unique. For instance, incorporation of the Baltic States into

USSR was followed by international condemnation and their international recognition was quick and less complicated due to their previous sovereign statehood.

This research employs a Large-N quantitative research design to test the set of hypotheses that were formulated, as described in the preceding section, based on the strength, weakness, and gaps in the literature and their relationship with the existing IR theories. The defining characteristics of Large-N quantitative research include a robust degree of reliability, accuracy, external validity, and precision of the findings as “the greater the number of cases one can work with the more robust and generalizable the results become” (Rothman, 2006, p.2). The statistical method of Logistic Regression, also called Logit Model, is appropriate for this research due to the dichotomist outcome of the dependent variable: recognition vs. non-recognition. The six hypotheses will be tested using logit statistical model with a confidence level of 95%. The Z-scores for 95% confidence level are -1.96 and +1.96 and the probability cut off is 0.05. Thus, $Z < -1.96$ or $Z > +1.96$ and $P < 0.05$ (Hellevik, 2009).

The next subsection provides a description of the variables, their operationalization, and sources of data.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable (DV) in all of the six hypotheses is international recognition, which is shortened to ‘recognition’. Hereafter, ‘recognition’ refers to recognition of an aspirant state by a UN member state, alternatively called ‘the recognizer’. Operationally, recognition means official acknowledgement of an aspirant state by an existing member of the UN as a new sovereign and independent state with its own international legal personality. The empirical characteristics of official recognition involves a formal declaration or resolution by the

recognizer state that is officially published or sent to the aspirant state. This can be followed by exchange of diplomats and establishment of official embassies or diplomatic missions. From a measurement perspective, recognition is binary, and the responding outcome is dichotomous: recognition vs non-recognition. The DV is coded (1) for recognition and (0) for non-recognition. Information about recognition derives from two sources. First, the primary source of information is the foreign ministries of each member state of the UN. Second, the first source is complemented and confirmed by the evidence of recognition found in the literature as needed.

Independent Variables

Vulnerability

The independent variable in first hypothesis (H1) is ‘vulnerability’. A recognizer is operationally defined as vulnerable if it is facing a domestic separatist movement that is actively and publicly campaigning for secession from the home state either through peaceful or violent means (Guibernau, 2006). Recognizer states are assigned a code between 0 – 3. States not facing domestic secession are coded (0), while vulnerable states are coded between 2 – 3 depending on the scale and intensity of secession. The variation is measured in terms of violence or peacefulness of the secession. Vulnerable states without violence is coded (1) where secession exists, but it does not involve armed conflict. For example, the Catalonia region is attempting to secede from Spain through peaceful and democratic means, thus Spain is coded (1).

Vulnerable states involving violence and armed conflict are coded between 2 – 3. A state is coded (2) if the armed conflict between the separatist entity and the parent state resulted in 25-999 battle related deaths per year. States with secessionist conflicts resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle related deaths per year are coded (3). In keeping with the temporal range of this

study, the final vulnerability score assigned to each recognizer is the average between 1993 and 2011.

In the final reconfiguration of data and before performing the statistical tests, all recognizer states are coded dichotomously in measuring vulnerability. States not vulnerable to domestic separatism are coded (0). States vulnerable to domestic separatism are coded (1) regardless of the number of deaths per year. Such a reconfiguration and the final binary coding was adopted to meet the logit regression test technical requirement and the binary outcome of the dependent variable. The second reason for the binary coding involves the consensus in the literature about the causal relationship between vulnerability and recognition. Some scholars maintain that states vulnerable to domestic separatism regardless of the scale and intensity will avoid granting recognition to aspirant states, because it will legitimize the demands of their own domestic separatist movements. For example, Bucheit (1978, p.103) argues that “even the slightest recognition of secession...would be as unwise as showing blood in the lion’s cage” for a vulnerable state.

A recognizer coded (0) is expected to recognize an aspirant state while a state coded (1) will not extend recognition to an aspirant state. The level and the intensity of domestic separatist movement of a recognizer, and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is further elaborated in the coding rule, found in Appendix A. The previous empirical studies of vulnerability have produced mixed or inconclusive results. This research hypothesizes that a vulnerable state is unlikely to recognize an aspirant state. The primary information source to measure a recognizer’s vulnerability comes from an original dataset on secessionist movements between 1816 and 2011 produced by Ryan Griffiths (2015). The original dataset by Griffiths measures the level of violence based on the number of deaths per year. His

coding of the level of violence experienced annually in a given secessionist-home state dyad is as follows: (0) – no violence, (1) – 25-999 battle related deaths per year, and (3) – 1,000+ battle related deaths per year.

Regime type

This research investigates the causal relationship between political regime type, specifically democracies, and recognition of aspirant states. As previously stated, this variable extends the logic of democratic peace theory, a sub-theory of liberalism in IR, to recognition of aspirant states. The democratic peace theory has been one of the most empirically well-established theories in IR that primarily suggests democracies are less apt to engage in conflict with one another and are supportive of democratization processes worldwide. Building on DPT, this variable focuses on the relationship between the levels of democracy among the parent and aspirant states and how it affects recognition of aspirant state by democratic states.

Democratic states are operationally defined based on their level of freedom. This operationalization is based on the Freedom House Index. Freedom House (FH) publishes an annual report, *Freedom in the World*, on the degree of democratic freedoms in nations and significant disputed territories around the world. FH employs a scale of 1-7, with one being the freest and 7 being the least free. FH divides all states and disputed territories into three categories based on the 1-7 scale: Free (1-2.5), Partly Free (3-5), and Not Free (5.5-7). Thus, using the data from FH, the recognizer, parent, and home states are divided into these three categories.

The independent variable in hypotheses 3 and 4 is “competitive democratization” (Broers, 2005, p.71), which is a comparison of levels of democracy between the parent and aspirant states. There is a winner and loser between the parent and aspirant states in competitive

democratization. The democratic recognizers' recognition decision is influenced by the winner of the competitive democratization process. Democratic recognizer states are expected to recognize aspirant states, which are more democratic compared to their parent states. Alternatively, democratic states are expected to avoid granting recognition to aspirant states when the parent state is comparatively more democratic than the aspirant state. The direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables is positive; when the aspirant state has a higher level of freedom compared to its parent state, the probability of recognition by democratic recognizer states increases. For example, Somaliland is an aspirant state seceding from Somalia. Somalia is ranked *Not Free* while Somaliland is *Partly Free*. The United States, a *Free* state, is ought to recognize Somaliland because the aspirant is relative more free than the parent state. Another example of the opposite case is Palestine and Israel. Israel is ranked *Free* while Palestine is ranked as *Not Free*. In this case, the parent state is more free than the aspirant state. Therefore, the United States is unlikely to recognize Palestine.

Based on the ranking of democratic states into Free and Partly Free by the Freedom House, two variables were created; free and partly free states. The first variable will measure recognition of aspirant states by democratic states labeled as *Free*. The second variable will measure recognition of aspirant states by states labeled as *Partly Free*. Since this variable is primarily concerned with recognition by a democratic state, autocratic recognizer states, labeled as *Not Free*, are excluded from the statistical model.

The level of democracy among aspirant and parent states fluctuates. Sometimes the recognizer, parent, and aspirant states can have the same freedom level or fall under the same ranking (Free & Partly Free). These differences and alternative combinations; when the freedom levels of all three entities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) align, variegate, and or take a

completely different form are taken into consideration. There are different probability values assigned to each alternative combination. The probability scale assigned to each combination are; 0 – unlikely, 1 – likely, 2 – more likely, and 3 – highly likely. A detailed coding of this variable is included in Appendix A.

Religion

Operationalization and measurement of religion in IR is a challenging issue. Empirical studies including religion in a cross-national capacity are scarce within the field of IR. Fox (2011, p.58) provides two reasons why religion is ignored in the quantitative studies of IR. First, “the lack of attention that scholars give to the topic provides a poor basis on which to develop variables”. Second, building quantifiable measurement requires accurate and reliable reading of the “minds of political actors to discover their true motivations”, which is hard to achieve empirically. This study investigates the causal relationship of religious similarities and differences between recognizer, aspirant, and home states. As such, each unit under study—recognizer, aspirant, home state—is operationally defined by the majority population of each unit that are nominally members of or identify with a specific religion. For example, the majority of the U.S. population identify as Christian while majority of the population in India adhere to Hinduism. Therefore, U.S. is operationally measured a Christian country while India a Hindu nation. The same operationalization applies to aspirant states. For instance, Somaliland and Kosovo are defined as Muslim due to majority population’s identification with Islam, while South Ossetia and Transnistria are defined as Christian.

Religion, present in H4 and H5, is a nominal variable that takes the nominal value based on majority religion of the recognizer, parent, and aspirant state. As the literature review showed,

even secular states' national identity and domestic institutions are inspired or shaped by their cultural factors including religion, which influences how a state behaves in international politics. Henderson (1999) considers ethnicity and religion as the two major cultural factors that shape the identity of states, irrespective of a state's official religion, whose primordial causal impact is relevant in international conflict and foreign policy. Barro and McCleary (2005) studied the role of majority religion in 188 countries in 1970 and 2000. They imply that the majority religion can influence how states behave, friendly or less friendly, toward their coreligionist and counter-religionist counterparts. This perception of friendliness or hostility among states is based on the in-group and out-group identity formation found in "Social Identity Theory". Their empirical research demonstrates that "40 percent—75 countries—are classified as having state religions in 2000" while "39 percent of 189 countries—73—had state religions in 1970" (Barro and McCleary, 2005, p.1334-1335). Therefore, there is ample evidence in the literature to study the role of religious affinities among states and the casual link between religion and international recognition. Information about majority religion of recognizer, home, and aspirant states comes from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) that collects detailed data on religious adherence worldwide since 1994.

In the dataset the religion variable is divided into seven categories. The division is based on the majority religion of each unit under study. The seven categories are Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Folk Religion, and Irreligion. This configuration of the data is made to satisfy the methodological and technical aspects of Logistic Regression Model. The number of countries falling under each category varies. For instance, a majority of countries fall under the category of Islam and Christianity while only one country, Israel, is in the Judaism category.

As hypothesized in the *Theoretical framework and Hypothesis* subsection of chapter two, recognition is more likely to take place when the recognizer and aspirant states have the same religion that is different than the religion of the parent state. For example, Kosovo is an aspirant state that is seceded from Serbia. The aspirant is an Islamic state while the parent is a Christian state. Islamic recognizer states should recognize Kosovo as hypothesized in this study. On the contrary, recognition is less likely to take place when the recognizer and parent states have the same religion that is different than the aspirant state. For example, in the case of Kosovo versus Serbia, Christian states are unlikely to recognize Kosovo because Serbia is a Christian country. There are other possibilities as well. For example, the religions of all three polities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) can align or take an alternative combination; the recognizer state will have a religion that is not the same as either the parent or aspirant state. Such alternative combinations are accounted for by assigning specific probability values which are: 0 – unlikely, 1 – likely, 2 – more likely, and 3 – highly likely. A detailed coding of this variable is presented in Appendix A.

The literature shows that the motivations of states to recognize aspirant states are diverse. In order to account for alternative explanations a number of control variables are included in this study. These variables and their operationalization is presented below.

Control Variables

In order to accurately establish the internal validity and explanatory power of the causal relationship between the Independent Variables (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV) several control variables are included in this study. The control variables account for alternative explanations of recognition decisions, identify and avoid spurious causal relationship between

IVs and DV, as well as correctly measure the correlation between explanatory variables and variable of interest through an avoidance of omitted variable bias (King, Keohane, and Verba, 2012). The chosen control variables will be held constant, as other plausible explanation for the outcome of DV, to correctly measure the causal effect of IVs over DV (Pollock, 2012).

Explanation for each of the control variables selected for this research are presented below.

Economic development

Economic development is selected as control variable to account for variation in recognition decisions between rich and poor countries. Operationally rich and poor countries are defined in terms of their Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (GDPPC). The richer a country the higher its GDPPC while the poorer the country the lower its GDPPC. Rich and economically developed countries exhibit a pro-status quo bias and are reluctant to admit new members to the club of sovereign states than countries with lower gross domestic product (Ker-Lindsay, 2012; Maoz, 1989; Paquin, 2010). To measure the variation of behavior between wealthy and poor countries, the GDPPC is used as the main indicator (Mirilovic and Siroky, 2016) to test how rich and poor states behave, extend, or withhold recognition, when the other three variables are equal. The source for this variable is the World Bank - World Development Indicators.

Population

The second control variable is raw population of the recognizer, home, and aspirant state. Aspirant states with substantial population in proportion to the home state draw significantly more attention of the international community and sovereign states compared to aspirant states with significantly less population size compared to their home states (Barata, 2011; Badescu,

2016). Aspirant states that are economically developed and have larger population size are usually well-organized and actively engage sovereign states to attract international recognition (Henrikson, 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that states will react differently towards aspirant states when the population size is significantly larger in proportion to the home states. Will population size affects states' decision about recognition when all the three intendent variables are equal? This will control for the population size. Data for population size comes from World Bank - World Development Indicators, the United States Central Agency Factbook, and the extant literature on aspirant states.

Official state religion

Barro and McCleary (2005) showed the existence of a correlation between states' behavior in international politics and official religion. The identity and behavior of states that have an official state religion are shaped by the religion of the majority population. Similarly, states treat their coreligionist counterparts favorably when issues of interest conflict are at stake. Operationally, a state religion is defined as the religion that a particular state has officially declared as the established religion of the state through its constitution. Thus, the official state religion is added to control for variation in recognition decisions among states. Information about state religion comes from ARDA.

Government regulation of religion

Some countries regulate religious practices and religion in general through official laws, administrative actions, and policies. Operationally, government regulation of religion is defined as the "restrictions placed on the practice, profession, or selection of religion" (Grim and Finke,

2007, p.636). It is measured by examining constitutions and other official laws of the countries. Information for this variable comes from ARDA. Building on the definition of Grim and Finke (2007), ARDA established a database where countries are ranked on scale of 0-10, with 0 being the least regulation and 10 the most regulation. This variable will account for variation in recognition decisions, if any, based on the regulation of religion by governments.

Case Selection

The ten cases selected for this research were established in literature review. However, it is essential to review how the selected cases follow the methodological requirements for case selection in Large-N quantitative research. This section will also provide brief background information about each of the ten cases. Information about aspirant states primarily derive from the existing literature. Scholarship and research focusing on domestic dynamics of aspirant states is well established in academia. It will serve as the primary source in application, measurement, and testing of the operationalization characteristics as well selection of cases.

Before delving into the criteria for case selection, it is imperative to review some basic methodological guidelines for selection of cases in Large-N quantitative analysis. Selection bias in Large-N quantitative research design is a consequential challenge that can potentially lead to spurious causal inferences and negatively affect the external validity of the findings and their generalizability (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig, 2011). To avoid selection bias, a representative sample of the population, a small quantity of the population that accurately reflects the larger population or phenomena under study, should be chosen (May, 2002). To further reduce selection bias and enhance the credibility of case selection, the sample should be randomized. The randomization happens when two conditions are met. First, each individual or case in the

population must have equal opportunity to be selected for analysis. Second, the sample chosen should follow a manner where “each and every possible combination of n cases in the sample has an equal opportunity to be selected for analysis” (Manheim et al., 2006, p.113). The caveats about selection bias indicate that random selection of cases is indispensably crucial for the validity of the inferences made and their generalizability. However, if the prescribed strategies to minimize selection bias is impossible, purposeful selection of cases is an option. If the latter is the case, “selection of cases should avoid selecting on the outcome of the variable and on mediating variables and the proxies” (Toshkov, 2016, p.251). King and colleagues also point out that when random selection is not available, it is advisable to make sure at least enough variation on both the outcome variable of interest and on the main explanatory variable is retained if it is not possible to avoid a selection based on its value (King et al., 1994).

In keeping with the abovementioned case selection guidance, two sets of cases are selected for this research. First, the observation of recognition decisions by all sovereign states. Since the unit of analysis is the country-level recognition decisions, all current member states of the UN are chosen to be analyzed in terms of their recognition decisions. This avoids the possible methodological shortcomings – selection bias or randomization. The second set of cases includes a group of aspirant states where the recognition decisions of UN members are cross examined. As the literature review shows aspirant states constitute a small group of entities. The entities that fit the working definition of aspirant states are selected. The conceptual and empirical parameters for selection of cases is based on the working definition of aspirant state, established in the literature review, and the operationalization indicators of aspirant states – territory, government, population, capacity for international relations, absent or limited recognition, two years of existence, and declaration of independence. In order to establish which

entities meet the criteria for aspirant state, two strategies will be pursued. First, the existing empirical work in the literature on aspirant states will be used to ascertain that the entities meet the four criteria of Montevideo Convention. Examining every single aspirant state to establish the Montevideo Convention criteria is beyond the scope and breadth of this research. Therefore, I will rely on the empirical findings of previous scholarship. Second, to determine the duration of existence and declaration of independence, I will rely on the official statements and other historical documents related to each of the aspirant states.

The existing empirical studies on aspirant states discussed in chapter 2 agree that Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Somaliland, South Ossetia, Taiwan, Transnistria, and Western Sahara are recognition-seeking aspirant states that meet the Montevideo Convention criteria for statehood who attained limited international recognition or none at all.

The following is brief description of each of the cases and establishes the two additional criteria, declaration of independence and duration of existence, which are part of the working definition. Much of the background information about each case derives from nonacademic sources such as CIA World Factbook, Encyclopedia Britannica, and country reports by the UN and Freedom House, as well as country profiles by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The Republic of Abkhazia

Abkhazia was a sovereign independent principality before it was conquered by and became part of the Czarist Russian Empire in 1864 until 1917 October Revolution. In 1919 Abkhazia was given autonomous status, which developed into federal republic status in 1921 within the USSR. However, Abkhazia was made united with Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic

later in the same year in 1921. After the dissolution of the USSR, Georgia adopted again the Constitution of the Georgian Democratic Republic of 1921, without Abkhazia included. On 23 July 1992, the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia adopted their Constitution of 1925, under which Abkhazia was a sovereign state and subject to international law. An Abkhazian government offer to restore the pre-1931 mutual treaty was declined by the Georgian government, which replied on 14 August 1992 with an offensive against Abkhazia that signally failed. Allied troops, composed of Abkhazians, other non-Kartvelian residents of Abkhazia, and North Caucasian volunteers, expelled Shevardnadze, the Georgian president at the time, and his fighters. A ceasefire was reached following the war in 1994. It was followed by establishment of United Nations Observer Mission and a Russian-led peacekeeping force to prevent future conflict. In November 1994, Abkhazia first declared independence from Georgia and set up its own government, and Vladislav Ardzinba became president. Abkhazia again officially declared independence from Georgia in 1999. The declaration was denied by Georgia and it received no international recognition. In August 2008, Abkhaz forces allied with Russia in the Russo-Georgian War that annulled the 1994 ceasefire between Abkhazia and Georgia. Russia officially recognized Abkhazia in 2008. The same year, Georgian parliament declared Abkhazia as a Russian-occupied territory. Abkhazia had a population of 240,705 and a GDP of USD 722,115,000 in 2011. Abkhazia's capital is Sukhumi. The official languages of Abkhazia are Abkhazian and Russian. 90% of Abkhazia identify themselves as Christian while 10% Muslim. It covers 8,660 square kilometers (3,340 sq. mi). In addition to Russia, three members of the UN recognize Abkhazia, which are Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Nauru. Abkhazia is also recognized by Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria—unrecognized aspirant states

themselves. Abkhazia has unofficial diplomatic relations with four UN member states of Belarus, Eritrea, Syria, and Turkey.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)

Saharan Arab Democratic Republic also known as Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is a self-declared state that claims control over disputed territory of Western Sahara that is presently occupied by Morocco. SADR declared independence in 1976 and was recognized by 80 UN member states following four decades of its independence. 39 states have withdrawn or frozen their independence. It is currently recognized by 45 UN member states. African Union admitted SADR as a member which was followed by Morocco's protest and leaving the Union. Morocco however rejoined AU in 2017. According to the SADR foreign ministry website, it has attended the Non-Aligned Movement or the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership meetings as a guest. According to the World Bank SADR had a population of 554,000 people, in territory under its direct control, and a GDP of USD 1,385,000,002 in 2011. SADR's claimed capital is El-Aaiun while its current capital is Tifariti. The official languages of SADR are Arabic and Spanish. Islam is the predominate religion of SADR residents. The Western Sahara region was a colony of Spain from 1884 until 1976. Upon Spanish withdrawal, the Polisario Front (PF), a military and political organization based in Algeria, declared independence, and established a government in exile. The Polisario Front is composed of Saharawis and nomadic people of the Western Sahara. Upon Spanish withdrawal both Morocco and Mauritania laid claim to 75% of the territory PF claimed as part of its territory. PF fought both Morocco and Mauritania for the territory. In 1979 Mauritania abandoned its territorial claim and made peace with PF. Morocco, however, annexed the territory abandoned by Mauritania. FP fought a 16-year guerilla war

against Morocco that ended with a UN-brokered ceasefire. Since then, FP and Morocco are in a frozen conflict status over the territory. Morocco has postponed several attempted referendums in the region to decide the territorial claims.

Republic of Kosovo

Kosovo covers an area of 10,908 square kilometers (4,212 Sq. mi) in the Balkan peninsula. Its capital is Pristina. It had a population of 1,791,1000 people and GDP of USD 6,649,291,076 in 2011, according to the UN and the World Bank. According to Kosovo's constitution, Albanian and Serbian are the official languages. It is a secular state with no official state religion. About 95% of Kosovars identify as Muslim while the remaining are Christian and other religious minorities. Kosovo is a multiparty parliamentary representative democratic republic. According to its constitution the country is governed by the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions.

Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in February 2008. As of 2018, it is recognized by 113 UN member states. Serbia claims Kosovo as part of its territory and rejected its independence. Kosovo is member of several international organizations including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). Kosovo was a province of the Serbian republic of the larger former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). After the dissolution of SFRY in 1990s the region was marred by several conflicts and nationalistic movements. SFRY was made of up of several republics such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia as well as two autonomous provinces within Serbia—Vojvodina and Kosovo. All the republics gained independence following the breakup of SFRY while Kosovo remained part of Serbia. The Albanian Kosovars demanded

independence, but Serbia responded to separatist pressure by launching a brutal crackdown on the territory's Albanian population. The Kosovo Liberation Army fought Serbian forces led by Slobodan Milosevic that resulted in a war of independence from about 1998 through 1999. The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution in 1999 ending the war and a peacekeeping force of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was deployed, which provided some autonomy for Kosovo. Following the end of the war, Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo and a UN sponsored administration took over control of Kosovo. In February of 2008, the Kosovo Assembly unanimously voted to declare independence from Serbia.

Nagorno-Karabakh (RNK)

The Republic of Artsakh also commonly known as Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (RNK) is a self-proclaimed secessionist aspirant state in the South Caucasus region. The old autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast was part of Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic that occupied an area of about 1,700 square miles (4,400 square km) while about 2,700 square miles (7,000 square km), bigger than its previous territory, is currently under the control of RNK. RNK's capital is Stepanakert. RNK is a unitary presidential republic and the executive branch is headed by a president who is both head of the government and the state. RNK's unicameral National Assembly constitutes its legislature. Both the president and members of National Assembly are directly elected by the people. According to the UN and WB, RNK had a population of 294,906 people and a total GDP of USD 4,507,638,386 in 2011. The population of RNK is 95% ethnic Armenians and 5% other minorities that include Azerbaijanis, Russians, Assyrians, Ukrainians, Georgians, and other minorities. Majority of the population is Christian, and the official language is Armenian.

The area was incorporated into the USSR as an autonomous Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast within the Azerbaijan SSR in 1923. Following the decay of USSR, the tensions between ethnic Azeris and Armenians started to raise and exploded into violence when the region's parliament voted to join Armenia – another USSR republic. In 1988 Azerbaijani troops and ethnic Armenian separatists warred over control of the territory. For the next few years, ethnic Armenians gained control of the region and also pushed on to occupy Azerbaijani territory outside Karabakh, creating a buffer zone linking Karabakh and Armenia. In 1991 a referendum took place in the neighboring Shahumain region resulting in declaration of independence, which reignited the ethnic conflict from 1991 through 1994 when a truce was signed between the two sides leaving Nagorno-Karabakh a de facto independent state. Negotiations have so far failed to produce a permanent peace agreement, and the dispute remains unresolved. Although Armenia is considered the main patron state of RNK, it has not officially recognized RNK as an independent state. RNK is not recognized by any UN member state, only a few other aspirant states such as Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. However, RNK has unofficial diplomatic representative offices in Washington DC, Armenia, France, Germany, Russia, Lebanon, and Australia.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

TRNC is an aspirant state that comprises the northeastern part of the island of Cyprus. The state covers 3,355 km² (1,295 sq. mi) and had of 294,906 people and a GDP of USD 4,507,638,210 in 2011. While the overwhelming majority of TRNC population identify as Muslim, it has a secular state. TRNC's capital is North Nicosia. TRNC is a semi-presidential representative democratic republic. Prime minister heads the government while president is head

of the state. The executive power is exercised by the government and the legislative power by the Assembly of the Republic. TRNC's judicial branch is independent of government and the legislature. The island gained its independence from British rule in 1960. A constitutional power-sharing was established in 1960 based on which the Greek Cypriots secured 35 seats in the parliament and the post of the president. The Turkish Cypriots secured 15 seats and the post of the vice president. The president and the vice president had the veto powers in issues related to foreign policy and security. Turkey invaded the island after a coup d'état in 1974 that attempted to annex the island to Greece. The crisis resulted in relocation of Greek Cypriots from the north and the Turkish Cypriots from the south to the north and effectively partitioned the island along ethnic lines. Thus, TRNC was established which unilaterally declared independence from the Republic of Cyprus in 1983. The Republic of Cyprus and the UN called the declaration of independence legally invalid. The republic of Cyprus still lays claim on the TRNC and considers it occupied by Turkey. TRNC is recognized only by Turkey as a sovereign state. Before the partition the island was marred in interethnic and intercommunal conflict. As the conflicts continued, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 186 in March 1964, which called for the creation of a UN Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus. This led to the United Nations Buffer Zone, known as Green Line, which divided the island along ethnic line. Despite TRNC being recognized only by one UN member, it has unofficial representative offices in several countries such as USA, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Israel, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. TRNC has an official embassy in Turkey and several consulates across major cities in Turkey.

The State of Palestine

Palestine is a borderline case of an aspirant state for three reasons. First, the division of the Palestinian territory into two sections; West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Second, the restriction and disputed control of the Palestinian state over the territory it claims. Third, Palestine is not a secessionist state. It is not seceding from Israel. Instead, it is laying claim over territories that were assigned to Palestinians after the UN partition of the land. However, Israel can be considered a proxy home state, because of Palestine's struggle to retrieve control over its territory occupied by Israel. These complications will be further clarified when outlining the historical events preceding the declaration of independence by Palestine. For now, like other cases, a brief introduction of the state of Palestine in its current territory and status is presented.

The state of Palestine is a de jure sovereign state covering a total area of 6,220 square kilometers or 2,401sq.mi (Gaza Strip totals 360 Sq. km and West Bank totals 5,860 Sq.km), and had a population of 3,927,1000 people and a GDP of USD 10,465,400,00 in 2011 (World Bank Data). 93% of the population is Muslim followed by 6% Christians and 1% Druze and Samaritans (Morland, 2016). Arabic is the official language of Palestine. Jerusalem is its designated capital though its administrative center is in the city of Ramallah. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964 as an umbrella organization that coordinated several political and military organizations engaged in military and political struggle for the liberation of Palestinian lands and establishment of a viable state for Palestinians. In 1993 Israel and PLO signed the Gaza-Jericho Agreement that established the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) which is the basis for the current government of Palestine. The Palestinian government or the Palestinian authority operates within a semi-presidential multiparty republic framework. The legislative power is vested in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Its members

are elected by Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The executive power is exercised by the prime minister who is appointed by the president. The latter is elected through popular vote. PNA is in a temporary status, thus, Palestine does not have an established constitution or independent judicial branch. The legislative and executive branches established a court system and laws that govern the territories.

The region covering current Gaza, West Bank, Jerusalem, and the state of Israel, has been a troublesome area for decades. The region covering today's Palestinian territories and the state of Israel was inhabited by a multicultural population with 86% Muslims followed by 10% Christians and 4% Jews in the 19th century (Encyclopedia Britannica). However, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the struggle for Palestinian statehood started after WWI. In 1917 Britain took over the region from the Ottomans and the first wave of Jewish immigration to the region started following the Balfour Declaration. The declaration supported creation of a homeland for the Jewish people and emphasized that the existing population should not be denied their civil and religious rights. In 1920, the San Remo Allied Powers conference granted Palestine to Britain as a mandate to prepare the region for self-rule. The same year, several riots took place in Jerusalem against the Balfour Declaration in support of Palestinian Arab identity. Inter-ethnic tensions and communal conflict, often resulting in casualties by the hundreds, grew over the following years as mass immigration continued. Several Arab revolts took place between 1936 through 1939 in the British Mandatory Palestine. In response to these revolts, the British Government adopted a new policy called the "White Paper of 1939". The policy rejected partitioning of the mandatory Palestine, proposed establishment of a Jewish national home and an independent Palestinian state within ten years. The policy also limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 for five years and placed restriction on Jews buying land from Arabs (Trevor, 1980).

However, the policy did not materialize as it was opposed by both Arab and Jewish population of the region. Thus, Guerilla fights, riots, and violent conflicts over land resulting in relocation of indigenous population continued until 1940s.

In 1947, a UN partition plan divided the land and recommended creation of independent Arab and Jewish states and a special international regime for control of the city of Jerusalem and its environs. In 1947, the Mandatory Palestine had a population that was estimated to be 30% Jewish and 70% Palestinian. The Jewish population owned 7% of the land while Palestinians owned 93%. The UN partition plan allocated 43% of the Mandatory Palestine to Palestinians and 57 % for the Jewish state (Khalidi, 1997, p.9-14). The Jewish population accepted the plan, but it was refused by the Arabs. In 1948, a war broke out that ended with the Israeli victory and control over 78% of the land. West Bank came under control of Jordan while Gaza Strip under Egypt. The war resulted in mass exodus of the indigenous Arab population who escaped or were forcefully expelled by Israel.

In 1967, Israel launched a pre-emptive attack against Egypt. Jordan and Syria were drawn into the war. The Six Day War ended with Israel capturing the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights from Syria, and the Sinai Peninsula. In the 1950s Yasser Arafat, a Palestinian Arab, started a guerilla war out of Egypt against Israel. Arafat latter became leader of the PLO established by Arab League in 1964. In 1973 another war broke out between Egypt and Israel that was followed by a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Sinai came under control of Egypt. In 1974 PLO adopted a 10-point program including compromise with Israel and demanding control over historic Palestinian lands. In 1982 Egypt withdrew from Gaza and Jordan withdrew from the West Bank in 1988. Following these two events PLO officially declared the independence of the State of Palestine in November 1988 as a government in exile in Algeria. 80

countries recognized the new state of Palestine by the end of the same year. By mid-1989, Palestinian state was recognized by 94 states (Khader, 2014). The new state of Palestine has abandoned its claim over the entire territory. Instead, the Palestine state claims sovereignty over territories based on borders of June 1967 that include West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem which constituted Arab territories before the Six Day War.

In 1993, the Oslo Accord was signed between PLO and Israel resulting in formation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) which would govern areas A and B in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. West Bank at its current status is divided into three administrative sections. Palestine fully controls one that covers less than 20% of the territory. The second section covering another 20% of the territory is dividedly controlled. Israel controls security while Palestinians have the civil control. The third section covering 60% of the West Bank is under Israeli control. When Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, it came under the control of Hamas – a radical group involved in terrorism and armed resistance against Israel. In its current status, the Palestinian state is recognized by 136 UN member states. Palestine started a campaign to gain full membership status in the UN in 2009. In 2011 Palestine submitted its application for full membership in the UN. The move was opposed by Israel and her allies including USA, which has veto power in the UN Security Council. The efforts to gain full membership failed. However, in 2012, it became a non-member observer state in the United Nations. The state of Palestine is a member of the Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), G77 and the International Olympic Committee.

Republic of Somaliland

Somaliland is a self-educated state, with Hargeisa as its capital, and internationally known as an autonomous region of Somalia. Somaliland covers an area of 176,120 square kilometers (68,000 Sq. mi). UN and WB reported its population around 3,500,000 people and GDP of USD 1,400,000,000 in 2011. Majority of the population practice Islam. The official languages of Somaliland are Somali, Arabic, and English. Somaliland is not recognized by any of the UN member states. Somaliland has a working political system, government institutions, police force and its own currency. Somaliland is a presidential constitutional republic. The executive branch is headed by a president. The Somaliland parliament exercise legislative powers that is made of two chambers; the upper house also known as House of Elders and the lower house known as House of Representatives. Both the president and parliament members are appointed through elections. According to the Somaliland constitution, the country has an independent judiciary headed by the Supreme Court. The judiciary has a three-level court system; the primary, secondary, and Supreme Court.

The European empires divided the Horn of Africa among themselves. The area known as Somaliland came under the British control. Somaliland became independent in June 1960. The same year the Trust Territory of Somalia, under the control of Italy, gained independence. The two territories formed the Somali Republic. The newly emerged Somali Republic underwent several domestic conflicts and political crises in the decades following its formation. In the 1990s the Somali government led by Siad Barre cracked down on rebels based in Hargeisa that wanted to separate and form an independent Somaliland. In 1991 the movement of Barre collapsed, and the Hargeisa based separatists, known as Somali National Movement, unilaterally declared independence from Somali and reinstated the borders of the formerly short-lived

independent state of Somaliland. In 2001, local authorities held a referendum to affirm its newly drafted constitution and its independence from Somalia. Though Somaliland is not recognized internationally, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) made its goal to campaign for international recognition. Somaliland MFA manages international trade and facilitates foreign investment in the country. It has signed strategic agreement with Ethiopia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) to improve trade relations and infrastructure. Somaliland has established unofficial diplomatic missions in several countries. It has representative offices in UAE, Ethiopia, South Africa, Sweden, Italy, and USA. Denmark has established a political office in Hargeisa. Ethiopia has its embassy in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, however, it has established a consulate office in Hargeisa headed by a diplomatic with the rank of an ambassador. Somaliland issues passwords to its citizens which are recognized by eight countries including South Africa, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Belgium, France, South Sudan, and Kenya.

Republic of South Ossetia (RSO)

Republic of South Ossetia, also known as Tskhinvali Region, is a self-declared separatist state in the South Caucasus within the northern part of the Republic of Georgia. The state covers an area of 3,900 square kilometers (1,500 sq. mi) and its capital is Tskhinvali. According to the UN and WB, RSO had a population of 54,000 people and a GDP of USD 13,500,000 in 2011. The RSO constitution establishes the republic as a semi-presidential republic. Executive power is exercised by president who is head of the state. The president is elected through popular vote and in turn appoints a prime minister. RSO has a unicameral parliament whose members are elected through popular vote. The official languages of RSO are Ossetian and Russian. Majority of Ossetians are Christian while a small minority practices Islam and neopaganism.

South Ossetia declared itself as an independent state in 1920, but it did not last long as it was incorporated into the USSR in 1922. It gained autonomous oblast status as part of the Socialist Republic of Georgia within the USSR. In the 1980s a separatist movement emerged in South Ossetia seeking secession from Georgia and unification with North Ossetia, which is now part of Russia. Following dissolution of the USSR, Georgia gained independence in 1991, claiming the region as part of its territory. South Ossetia declared independence in December of 1991. The disagreement turned into armed conflict between Ossetian and Georgian forces. Russia brokered a ceasefire in 1992 and the parties agreed to establish a peacekeeping force consist of military forces of Georgia, Russia, South Ossetia, and North Ossetia. South Ossetia continued to declare itself independent from Georgia and approved a constitution in 1993 establishing itself as a republic. Negotiations to resolve the conflict over sovereignty failed and both sides engaged in sporadic fights. The armed conflict escalated in 2004 and again in 2008; the latter involved Russian intervention. After a week of clashes between Ossetian and Georgian forces, Russian forces entered the conflict backing South Ossetians. Following the Russo-Georgian War, Russia officially recognized South Ossetia as an independent state. Six UN member states recognized RSO that include Russia, Nicaragua, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Syria, and Venezuela. RSO is also recognized by a few aspirant states such as Abkhazia, Sahrawi Democratic Republic, Transnistria, and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Republic of China – Taiwan

Taiwan is a borderline case of an aspirant state due to its unique historical development and ambiguity over its lack of official declaration of independence. It meets all the criteria of the working definition except official declaration of independence, yet it is added to the list of cases for two reasons. First, it is considered an aspirant state in the literature. Second, it meets most of the working definition criteria, and showed a reluctance to join mainland China and become part of the Peoples Republic of China. The historical development of Taiwan is different than the rest of the nine cases. Following the end of World War II, Chinese nationalists took control of Taiwan and parts of mainland China in 1945. A civil war broke out between Chinese communists, occupying most of the mainland China, and the Chinese nationalists. The communists defeated the nationalists in 1949 and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland China while the nationalist forces fled to Taiwan and established Republic of China (ROC) claiming jurisdiction over Taiwan and the rest of mainland China. The international community considered ROC as the legal representative of China, gaining international recognition from several countries, admittance to the UN, and securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council until 1970s. In the early 1970s, relations between China and the USA improved. The UN membership of ROC and UN Security Council were switched to PRC. The international recognition of PRC by several countries resulted in withdrawal of recognition from ROC. However, several countries still recognize ROC as an independent state. PRC, on the other hand, regards Taiwan as rebel region that must reunite with the mainland China. Taiwan has not declared independence because it considers itself as China. However, following the end of martial law in 1987, the Taiwanese independent movement as emerged. Taiwan meets all

criteria of the aspirant state except formal declaration of independence. Toomla (2014) justifies inclusion of Taiwan to the list of aspirant states as below:

There are secessionist tendencies in the country and independence has been a subject of heated debate. There are positions that emphasize democracy and the attributes of statehood and call for the recognition of an independent Taiwan (Otopalik, 2006). There are also views opposed to independence (Yazhou, 2007), mostly from mainland China.... Surveys show that the idea of Taiwanese independence is popular and, according to some, it has received support from over 50% of respondents (Wang, 2012). This can be interpreted as Taiwan at least thinking about independence from China, about creating a separate state. (P.76).

Taiwan covers an area of 36,197 square kilometers (13,976 Sq. mi) and its capital is Taipei. According to the WB, Taiwan had a population of 23,224,912 people and a GDP of USD 485,679,359,724 in 2011. Mandarin is the official language of Taiwan. Majority, about 90%, of Taiwanese practice some of form Buddhism. The remaining 10% include adherents of Christianity and other minority religions. Taiwan is officially recognized by 17 UN member states. 114 UN member states withdrew their recognition of Taiwan after recognition PRC. The political and legal statuses of Taiwan are a contentious issue. Taiwan has its own constitution, armed forces, and independent judicial system.

Transnistria (PMR)

Transnistria also known as Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) is a self-declared separatist state seeking secession from Moldova since 1992. PMR covers an area of 4,163 square kilometers (1,607 sq. mi) which is a narrow strip of land between the Dniester River and the

Ukrainian border. Its population and GDP in 2011 were reported as 523,000 people and USD 1,000,000,000 by WB. The PMR population is made up of several ethnic groups with 34% Russians, 32% Moldovans, 30% Ukrainians, and 4% Bulgarians. Majority of PMR inhabitants identify as Christian. The official languages of PMR are Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan. The largest city and capital is Tiraspol. PMR is a semi-presidential republic. The executive powers are exercised by the government and the parliament. The president and parliament members are elected through popular vote. President is head of the state while a prime minister heads the government. Parliament is a unicameral body, called the Supreme Council, which exercises legislative powers and is involved in executive powers as the prime minister is chosen by the majority in the parliament. According to the PMR constitution, the judicial branch is independent of the executive and the legislative branches.

In 1922, the area now constituting PMR became part of the Moldovan autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) within the Ukrainian SSR. After World War II PMR, with some degree of autonomy, became part of the newly formed Moldovan SSR of the USSR until early 1990. In September of 1990, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic unilaterally proclaimed as a Soviet Republic separate from Moldova in the second Congress of the Peoples' Representatives of Pridnestrovian. However, the proclamation was soon denied by the USSR headquarters and PMR came under control of the SSR of Moldova. The arrangement did not last long as in August 1991, the supreme council ruling PMR declared independence from Moldova and proclaimed PMR as an independent state. The same year, Moldova declared its independence from USSR and claimed PMR as part of its own territory. Moldova was admitted to the UN as an independent state in 1992, and UN considers PMR to be part of Moldova. Moldova took military action against PMR separatists attacking police and military units of the

PMR. The conflict escalated as Russian troops intervened to aid the PMR forces. PMR with help of the Russia forces has solidified its control over the territory it claims. The military conflict ended as a result of ceasefire agreement signed on July 21, 1992. PMR is not recognized by any UN member states, only three aspirant states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the Foreign Affairs Ministry of PMR (FAM-PMR), Russia has opened a consulate office in Tiraspol. The three aspirant states that recognize PMR have also established representative offices in Tiraspol.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research strategy, methodological approach, data collection and reconfiguration, operationalization of variables, and placed the case selection within the appropriate case selection methodological context. This research is limited to testing three variables namely vulnerability, regime type, and religion. The temporal range is limited to 2011. The spatial range is limited to studying recognition of aspirant states by all UN member states. The Logistic Regression is chosen for testing the hypothesis due to binary value of dependent variable. This study is restricted to studying recognition of the ten selected cases by all the UN member. The ten aspirant states that meet the working definition are Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Taiwan, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Somaliland, and Western Sahara. The data and information for the project derives from the existing databases and the literature. This chapter also provided brief background information about each of the selected cases. The next chapter provides discussion of the results and analysis.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents key findings of the statistical model and a discussion of the results. The statistical model tests five hypotheses. The first hypothesis examines whether states vulnerable to domestic separatism will grant or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. Recognizer states susceptible to domestic separatism are hypothesized as less likely to recognize an aspirant state. The second and third hypotheses evaluate whether free and partly free countries recognize an aspirant state that is more democratic than its parent state. Furthermore, free and partly free countries are expected to avoid granting recognition to an aspirant state if the parent state is comparatively more democratic than the aspirant state. The fourth and fifth hypotheses examine whether states make recognition decisions based on religious affinities. States are expected to recognize an aspirant state when the recognizer and aspirant states have the same religion that is different than the religion of the parent state. On the contrary, when parent and recognizer states have the same religion that is different than the aspirant, it is unlikely for recognition to take place. The research design (chapter 3) and coding rules (Appendix A) account for alternative combinations; when the religions of all three entities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) align, variegate, and or take an entirely different shape.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The results section reports results of findings of the statistical model and whether the results support or reject the proposed hypotheses. The discussion section focuses on interpretation of results and how they relate to the research questions as well as entails a contrast and comparison of the results with prior studies.

Results

The unit of analysis is the country level recognition decision. This thesis examined recognition of ten cases of aspirant states (Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Somaliland, South Ossetia, Taiwan, Transnistria, and Western Sahrawi) by the 193 UN member states through a Large-N quantitative research analysis. The statistical model of Logistic Regression, also called Logit Model, is chosen due to the binary outcome of the dependent variable: recognition vs. non-recognition. The first independent variable, vulnerability, is dichotomous; domestic separatism exists, or domestic separatism is not present. For the second independent variable, regime type, recognizer states are divided into two groups and coded Free and Partly Free. For the third variable, religious affinities, the recognizer countries are divided into seven categories based on majority religion of their population—Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Folk Religion, and Irreligion. The following results were obtained after running the Logistic Regression Model on the data.

Table 4:1 Results of Logit Regression

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>)
(Intercept)	-0.5627	0.3784	-1.49	0.1370
Recog_F	0.7477	0.1631	4.58	0.0000
Recog_PF	0.4822	0.1504	3.21	0.0013
Vulnerability	-0.3699	0.1846	-2.00	0.0452
Recog_Christ	-0.3660	0.1496	-2.45	0.0144
Recog_Islam	0.7774	0.1560	4.98	0.0000
Recog_Gov_Reg_Religion	0.0012	0.0388	0.03	0.9754
Aspiring dummy				
Abkhazia	-3.5801	0.5821	-6.15	0.0000
Kosovo	-0.4675	0.3508	-1.33	0.1826
Nagorno-Karabakh	-17.8996	770.3275	-0.02	0.9815
Northern Cyprus	-5.6249	1.0602	-5.31	0.0000
Palestine	1.7866	0.2423	7.37	0.0000
Somaliland	-19.9985	747.0770	-0.03	0.9786
South Ossetia	-2.6313	0.5353	-4.92	0.0000
Taiwan	-3.0252	0.6139	-4.93	0.0000
Transnistria	-18.3322	769.4135	-0.02	0.9810

The first hypothesis measures the causal relationship between vulnerable states and recognition of aspirant states. The first hypothesis is restated below:

- *H1: States with separatist challenges of their own are less likely to recognize aspirant states.*

After running the statistical model, there was evidence to support this hypothesis about vulnerability. As the results show the relationship is statistically significant with a coefficient of (-0.3699). The vulnerability variable has a Z-value of (-2.00) and a P-value of (0.0452). The direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables is negative. States facing a domestic separatist movement were expected not to recognize an aspirant state. Thus, the evidence supports the hypothesis. This suggests that states vulnerable to domestic separatism are less likely to recognize an aspirant state.

The second and third hypotheses measure the relationship between democratic states, or level of freedom, and recognition of aspirant states. Based on the categorization of democracies into Free and Partly Free by the Freedom House, two variables were created; free and partly free states. The two hypotheses testing the causal relationship between recognition and level of democracy are restated below.

- *H2: Democratic states are more likely to recognize an aspirant state when the aspirant state is more democratic than the home state.*
- *H3: Democratic states are less likely to recognize an aspirant state when the home state is more democratic than the aspirant state.*

The test results support both hypotheses. The results for the free countries variable (Recong_F) demonstrate that the relationship is real and statistically significant with a coefficient of (0.7477), a Z-value of (4.58), and P-value of (0.00001). This variable strictly measured recognition of aspirant states by free recognizer states based on the comparative level of democracy among aspirant and parent states. A free recognizer state was predicted to recognize

an aspirant state, if the aspirant state had a higher score of freedom compared to its parent states. Alternatively, a free recognizer state was predicted to not recognize an aspirant state if the parent state was comparatively more democratic and had a higher score of freedom. The direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables is positive; when the aspirant state has a higher score of freedom compared to its parent state, the probability of recognition by free recognizer states increases. The variable measuring recognition by free states (Recog_F) captures the behavior of a free state towards aspirant state based on the comparative freedom scores between aspirant and parent states. The research design (chapter 3) and coding rules (Appendix A) address alternative combinations; when the freedom scores of all three entities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) align, variegate, and or take a completely different form. There are different probability values assigned to each alternative combination. The variable (Recog_F) captures the cumulative results for all such variegated combinations.

The second variable (Recog_PF) examined recognition decisions by the partly free states. The previous variable pertinent to level of democracy (Recog_F) examined recognition decisions by states that are categorized as *Free States* by the Freedom House ranking of democracy. The Recog_PF variable examined recognition of aspirant states by states categorized as *Partly Free* by Freedom House. Like to the free states, this variable (Recog_PF) measuring recognition by partly free states captures the behavior of a partly free state towards aspirant state based on the comparative freedom scores between aspirant and parent states. The research design (chapter 3) and coding rules (Appendix A) address alternative combinations; when the freedom scores of all three entities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) align, variegate, and or take a completely different form. There are different probability values assigned to each alternative combination. The variable (Recog_PF) captures the cumulative results for all such variegated combinations.

The direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variable (partly free states and recognition) is positive; when the aspirant state has a higher score of freedom compared to its parent state, the probability of recognition by partly free recognizer states increases. The empirical results showed the relationship was statistically significant with the coefficient of (.04822), a Z-value of (3.21), and a positive P-value of (0.0013).

According to the empirical results both hypotheses 2 and 3 are true; states categorized as *Free and Partly Free* were more likely to support recognition of aspirant states that are comparatively freer than their parent states. On the other hand, free and partly free states did not recognize aspirant states whose parent states are comparatively more democratic and free. Therefore, the empirical evidence supported the logic behind the second and third hypotheses. However, the size of the impact differed among the free and partly free countries. The absolute value of coefficient for free countries (Recog_F) is (0/7477) while the absolute coefficient value for partly free countries (Recog_PF) stands at (.04822). Thus, it shows that the size of impact of free countries is greater than the partly free.

The two remaining hypotheses are about the relationship between religious affinities and recognition. The hypotheses generated for the religion variable are restated below.

- *H4: Aspirant states are more likely to gain recognition when aspirant and recognizer states have similar religion.*
- *H5: Aspirant states are less likely to gain recognition when the home state and the recognizer states have the same religion.*

The primary argument of the religion variable has a trinary logic. The literature review and the theoretical framework analysis revealed that a recognizer will gravitate towards its coreligionist when the home and aspirant states have different religions. Thus, the recognizer, as hypothesized, will recognize an aspirant state whose religion is the same as the recognizer and different than the home state. Alternatively, a recognizer will not recognize an aspirant state

when the recognizer and home states have similar religion that is different than the aspirant state. The two variables (Recog_Christ and Recog_Islam) captures the religions of recognizer, aspirant, and home states. The research design (chapter 3) and coding rules (Appendix A) address alternative combinations; when the religion of all three entities (recognizer, aspirant, and home states) align, variegate, and or take a completely different combined form. There are different probability values assigned to each alternative combination. The two variables (Recog_Christ and Recog_Islam)) capture the cumulative results for all such variegated combinations.

As previously stated in the research design chapter, the recognizer countries were divided into seven groups of countries based on the majority religion. These included Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Folk Religion, and Irreligion. This configuration of data was essential to satisfy the technical and methodological adjustments needed for logit regression model. Some groups of countries were dropped from the statistical model due to limited number of countries. Only three countries fell under the Hinduism category, one for Judaism, one under Irreligion group. All groups except Christianity and Islam had fewer than five countries. Thus, the results only show the results for Christian and Islamic countries.

The results for the Christian countries variable demonstrate that the relationship is real and statistically significant with coefficient (-0.3660), a Z-value of (-2.45), and a P-value of (0.0144). The Z-value (-2.45) has a negative sign while the hypothesis predicted a positive direction for the relationship. Thus, the evidence does not support the hypothesis. In other words, the evidence suggests the opposite to be true.

The results for Islamic countries are different than the Christian countries. The results demonstrate that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is both

statistically significant and real with a coefficient value of (0.7774), a Z-value of (4.98), and P-value of (0.00001). The Z-value is positive confirming the hypothesized positive direction of the relationship.

The final part of the religion variable compares the impact size of each of the two variables (Christian vs Islamic countries). The absolute coefficient value for the Christian countries is (-.3660) while it is (0.7774) for the Islamic countries. The results suggest that religion plays a significant role in recognition decision among Islamic countries. Also, the impact of religion is greater among Islamic countries compared to the Christian countries.

Four control variables were included in this study to gauge alternative potential factors that might affect states' recognition decisions. The first control variable, government regulation of religion, examined whether there was a causal relationship between recognition and the level of regulations placed on religion among the recognizer states. The government regulation of religious is operationally defined as "restrictions placed on the practice, profession, or selection of religion" (Grim and Finke, 2007, p.636). The previous four variables (Recog_P, Recog_PF, Recog_Christ, and Recog_Islam) examined the levels of democracy and religious affinities between the recognizer, aspirant, and home states. However, this variable only focuses on government regulation of religion among recognizer states and whether it impacted recognition decisions of the recognizer. Data for this variable comes from ARDA. Building on the definition of Grim and Finke (2007), ARDA ranks countries on a scale of 0-10, with 0 being the least regulation and 10 the most regulation.

The primary logic behind this control variable is as follows. 1) When the recognizer and aspirant states have the same religion that is different than the home state, the recognizer state with higher score of government regulation of religion is more likely to recognize the aspirant

state. 2) When the recognizer and home state have the same religion that is different than the aspirant state; the recognizer with higher score of government regulation of religion is less likely to recognize the aspirant state. The coding rules (Appendix A) provides detail coding of this variable whose cumulative value is captured in *Recog_Gov_Reg_Religion* variable as appears in the results (Table:4.1).

The results show that this variable is not statistically significant with the coefficient value of (0,0012), a Z-value of (0.03), and a P-value of (0.9754). The direction of the variable was positive, and the Z-value has a positive sign. This implies there is a relationship in theory, but it is statistically insignificant.

The remaining three control variables – population, official state religion, GDP per capita – were excluded from the statistical model. These variables were excluded due to unanticipated challenges that emerged during the study and methodological limitations. A more detailed explanation for exclusion of these variables is presented in the *Discussion* subsection of this chapter and further discussed in the *Limitations and recommendation for future research* subsection of chapter five.

In addition to the main scores for the independent variables, the results as Table: 4.1 shows also include scores for each of the ten cases. The coefficients of the cases relate to a technical aspect of the model. Though the scores for each individual case are important for validity of the model, they hold no interpretative value. Therefore, the fixed effects were included in the model but are not shown due to lack of substantive value.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate what shapes the incentives of states to extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. A multitude of factors were identified as crucial explanations behind states' recognition decisions. Among them three factors are less rigorously explored, under-researched, undertheorized, and or found to have inconclusive conclusions about their causal effects on recognition. These were vulnerability, regime type, and religion. This research suggested and hypothesized that states vulnerable to domestic secession were unlikely to extend recognition to an aspirant state. This Large-N, cross-national empirical study answers one of the secondary research questions--do states, domestically vulnerable to secession, recognize aspirant states? The answer is negative as the study gives evidence in support of the vulnerability proposition.

The empirical results reinforce the previous findings about vulnerability. Some scholars studied the vulnerability factors in regional contexts such as Africa and Eastern Europe, arguing states usually refrain from supporting and recognizing aspirant states. These states were compelled to be cautious, because extending recognition would embolden domestic separatist movements, threaten their domestic security, and lead to their territorial disintegration (Ayoob, 1995; Cervenka, 1969; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Herbst, 1989; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Hill and Jewett, 1994, Touval, 1972).

The empirical results also show that vulnerability is important for all the 193 UN member states studied in this thesis. Coggins' (2014) study found positive results for the vulnerably proposition in her study of recognition by great powers. This research expanded and applied the proposition to all states regardless of their relative power position in the global politics. The results show the logic of the proposition to be valid across all states. It predicts a general pattern

for vulnerable states' behavior regarding recognition. Findings of this study disagree with the positions of some scholars challenging the vulnerability proposition. For instance, Sideman (1997), Lewis (2002), Laitan and Samatar (1987) casted doubt over the deterrence effects of vulnerability citing several countries that supported secession abroad and even recognized aspirant states. However, findings of this study only demonstrate a cumulative and general behavior among states. Critics of vulnerability proposition are correct in referring to specific cases where vulnerability has not deterred states susceptible to secession from supporting and recognizing aspirant states. However, the outlier cases, Colombia and Russia for example, merit in depth case studies to figure out the strategic calculations of these vulnerable countries' recognition decisions.

The vulnerability proposition reflects realism's view of international politics. According to realism theory of IR, self-preservation, security, and national interest take precedent over other concerns for states. The results corroborate realism's prediction for behavior of states in international politics. This study demonstrated that states vulnerable to separatist movements avoided extending recognition to safeguard their national security and territorial integrity.

The next secondary research question examines the relationship between level of democracy and recognition. This question is positively answered. Levels of democracy and freedom among aspirant and parent states positively impact recognition of aspirant states by both *Free* and *Partly Free* states. Free and partly free states when faced with the choice of supporting the parent or aspirant states, gravitated towards the polities that were comparatively more democratic and had a higher score of freedom. The empirical results, contrary to Ozpek's conclusion (2014), demonstrate that regime type and democracy positively influence democratic recognizer's choice of recognition. However, Ozpek (2014) only focused on great powers and

determined that national interest and security take precedent over democratic values. This study empirically substantiates the previous studies purported aspirant states' effort to undertake democratization in order to increase their chances of recognition by democratic states.

This cross-national Large-N empirical research emboldens previous scholars' conclusion about specific cases of aspirant states that undertake democratic reforms to influence their chances of recognition by democratic states. The findings support Broers' conclusion that both home and aspirant states engage in "competitive democratization" to influence international recognition by democratic states (2005, p.71). This research also attests the generalizability of the "democratization-for-recognition strategy" (Baar et al, 2016, p.89) and the "strategy of earned sovereignty" Scharf (2003, p.374) where aspirant states actively campaign for recognition by democratic states through a demonstration of their democratic regimes.

The investigation of regime type in recognition reflected one of the primary arguments proposed by the DPT. This study reaffirms the theoretical explanation of DPT in that democracies perceive one another as legitimate and non-threatening. They cooperate with other democratic states and are supportive of democratic movements globally. This study confirms that democratic regimes generally favor expansion of democratic regimes (Shapiro, 2011). This study also provides evidence for generalizability and validity of the proposed cooperative nature among democracies and the overall promotion of democratization globally which is sometimes referred to as "democratic solidarity" (Cooper and Legler, 2001; Niedererger, 2013). This research reaffirms that DPT's argument holds true and stands the test of time across cross-national empirical tests.

The last secondary research question investigates whether religion affects recognition. The empirical results demonstrate the answer to be positive. However, the results are not

parsimonious and straight forward. Religion was found to be a critical factor in extending recognition to aspirant states among Islamic countries. Nonetheless recognition by Islamic countries varied across cases. Somaliland, despite being a majority Islamic country, did not attain recognition from any Islamic country. On the contrary, Palestine gained recognition by a majority of Islamic countries while another Islamic aspirant, Western Sahara's recognition, was limited. The results are in line with the hypothesized prediction. Countries were predicted to recognize an aspirant state when the home/parent state's religion is opposite of the aspirant and recognizer states. An example that demonstrates this can be recognition of Palestine by a majority of Islamic countries. It can be argued that Israel, being a majority Jewish nation, seems to have positively influenced Islamic countries' motivation to recognize Palestine.

Religion did not constitute a major factor in extending recognition by a Christian country. Unlike the case of Islam, Christian countries did not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh, a majority Christian state, separating from Azerbaijan – a majority Muslim country. Contrary to the predication of this study, a large number of Christian countries recognized Kosovo, where majority identify as Muslim, which separated from Serbia with a majority Christian population. One potential reason for the variation among Islamic and Christian countries could be that majority of Christian countries have secular governments. Although this study proposed that even secular governments and statesmen are influenced by majority religion, this empirical study provided the opposite among Christian countries. Another potential explanation can be distance. Distance between the aspirant and recognizer state was not included in this study. Future studies that include distance, among other potential factors, could shed light over the variation of results for Christian and Islamic countries. Another trajectory would be to conduct comparative case studies to further investigate variation of recognition among Islamic and Christian countries.

The only previous research that emphasizes the role of religion in motivating states to withhold or extend recognition to aspirant states is by Mirilovic and Siroky (2014, 2015). Their work was case specific and examined recognition of Kosovo, Palestine, and Israel. They focused on aspirant states without introducing a choice for recognizer to pick sides between the home and aspirant states. Their study found that countries with transitional religious ties to aspirant states were more likely to recognize. Also, they concluded that religious regulation by state was positively influencing recognition decision. This research took a different direction, focusing only nominally on religious similarity and differences among the home, aspirant, and the recognizer states.

This research established religion to fit in the constructivist theoretical framework. The empirical results demonstrate that the provisions of constructivist theory, as relevant to religious, provide inconclusive. Further future research could potentially establish a comparative explanatory power of the theory compared to other IR theories relevant for recognition.

Government regulation of religion, of the four control variables, was not supported by the empirical evidence to have a significant impact over recognition decision. This research predicted that states with higher rate of religious regulation will recognize a coreligionist aspirant states. The results proved the contrary to be the case. Future research only focusing on government regulation independent of religious similarities between three entities of concern (home, aspirant, and recognizer state) can establish further nuanced results.

The remaining three control variables – population, official state religion, GDP per capita – were excluded from the statistical model. These variables were excluded due to unanticipated challenges that emerged during the study and methodological limitations. The research design presented a choice for a recognizer state to support either the home or parent state based on the

religious similarities and level of democracy. As such, this the thesis initially predicated a possible variation could exist between the size of the population and the GDP per capita of home and aspirant states. However, after selection of cases based on the working definition, it was revealed that all the aspirant states had lower population size and GDP per capita compared to their parent states even after the subunits complete seceding the parent states, in all cases, remained significantly larger in terms of GDP per capita and population. Thus, the lack of variation placed constraints on the empirical analysis and therefore were dropped at later stage while performing the statistical tests. Moreover, the official state religion was excluded from the statistical analysis because the unavailability of reliable information about the state religions of aspirant states made it impossible to construct the comparative research design similar to restrictions with GDP per Capita and population.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings of the statistical model followed by discussion of the results. A Large-N cross-national empirical analysis was performed to investigate the causal relationship of three main variables; vulnerability, regime type, and religion. There was empirical evidence to support the vulnerability proposition, which was statistically significant. States vulnerable to deistical separatism were shown to avoid extending recognition to aspirant states. The results substantiated previous studies in support of the proposition. The evidence also disagreed with critics of the proposition proving that states in general are deterred by the logic of vulnerability. The outlier cases exception to the general pattern merit comparative case studies.

The evidence also supported that democracy influences recognition decisions among democratic states, though there was variation between free and partly free. Both groups of

countries were positively influenced by the level of democracy among home and aspirant state. Empirical results for the religion variable were twofold. Religion played a significantly positive role in recognition decisions among Islamic countries. Religion proved to be statically significant for Christian countries. However, the impact was opposite. Religion did not shape incentives of Christian countries to extend recognition to aspirant states. Government regulation of religion was statically insignificant. Inclusion of distance factor between the cases and recognizer states can improve our understanding of the causal relationship between religion and recognition.

Islam, a sub-variable of religion, had the greatest impact in terms of absolute Z-values on the dependent variable. The absolute values of the coefficient (Z-values) for each of the independent variables is presented in Table: 4.2 below. The variables are ranked from 1 to 7. 1 shows the least impact while 7 indicates the greatest impact in terms of overall size of the impact.

Table 4:2 Variable Level of Impact

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>)	Impact Size
(Intercept)	-0.5627	0.3784	-1.49	0.1370	2
Recog_F	0.7477	0.1631	4.58	0.0000	6
Recog_PF	0.4822	0.1504	3.21	0.0013	5
Vulnerability	-0.3699	0.1846	-2.00	0.0452	3
Recog_Christ	-0.3660	0.1496	-2.45	0.0144	4
Recog_Islam	0.7774	0.1560	4.98	0.0000	7
Recog_Gov_Reg_Religion	0.0012	0.0388	0.03	0.9754	1

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary and general conclusion about the main findings of the research questions of this thesis. Moreover, the limitations and strengths of this thesis are considered and suggestions for future research into international recognition of aspirant states are presented. The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section restates the research questions, significance of the study, and the main findings of the literature review. The next section presents the main empirical findings. The last section entails a discussion of limitations of this research and future research suggestions.

Research question and significance of study

The primary goal of this thesis was to assess what factors motivate states to extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. The secondary objective of this thesis was to address the terminological and definitional ambiguity in the literature and propose a parsimonious definition and term that encompasses all the necessary components of these entities. The two research questions and significance of the study are addressed below.

An assessment of the literature showed that despite tremendous progress in the study of aspirant states, the scholarship remains persistently mired in controversy over precise definition and terminology. Though there is improvement in the overall understanding and dynamics of these non-state polities, the controversy over the use of the appropriate terms has not been resolved. The myriad of different labels amalgamates into three broad terms—contested states,

unrecognized states, and de facto states. Despite a few exceptions, almost all scholars combine the term *state* with a prefix of their choice, which leads to scholars picking the term of their choosing with due justification while studying these phenomena. Despite the controversy over definitional disputes, the definitions are narrowing, and the concept stretching is contained. For the purpose of this thesis, the term “aspirant” (Berg and Pegg, 2016; Geldenhuys, 2009; Mirilovic and Siroky, 2015, 2016) was combined with the term *state*, thus forming ‘*aspirant state*’. An aspirant state is an unrecognized or partially recognized recognition-seeking separatist polity that has managed to break away from its parent state and meets the Montevideo Convention criteria for statehood – (1) a permanent population; (2) a defined territory; (3) a government; and (4) capacity to enter into relations with the other states – which aspires to become a sovereign independent state and admitted to the international community. This definition denotes two things. First, the entities meet the four criteria for statehood as enumerated in the Montevideo Convention, which are partially recognized or unrecognized. Second, all these entities aspire to become externally sovereign, internationally confirmed, and eventually admitted to the UN as full members. Thus, the aspirant state captures all these aspects.

These nascent states have become permanent features of the international system. Though these emerging states fulfill basic requirements for statehood, they are unrecognized or partially recognized, which restricts their aspiration for gaining full statehood. In order for new states and separatist polities to gain membership in the international community, they must secure recognition by an overwhelming majority of states and especially the most powerful and influential among them (Coggins, 2018). International recognition affirms their external legitimacy, admission to the international society, and subsequent membership in the UN as

sovereign states. Therefore, international recognition is the primary distinction between success and failure for aspirant states seeking full statehood.

The existing research has focused on the internal dynamics of aspirant states, namely state- and nation-building processes, democratization, and development of political, economic, and social institutions. Though there are exceptions, the creation of new polities and their international recognition has not been studied adequately by IR scholars (Coggins, 2011; Ker-Lindsay, 2012; Cunningham, 2014; Griffiths, 2016). The literature on international recognition of aspirant states is limited and often case specific. There are few systematic works directly focusing empirically and theoretically on recognition of aspirant states. This thesis attempted to fill the gap in the literature in regard to international recognition of aspirant states.

There are a number of reasons this study is important. First, the existing literature provides unsatisfactory explanations for why states grant or withhold recognition to aspirant states. Most studies on recognition have been case specific and limited. Second, the quest for recognition is a significant incentive for aspirant states in undertaking effective state- and nation-building, development of political and economic institutions, and democratization (Richards and Smith, 2015). Third, aspirant states are increasingly becoming important actors in the regional and international politics over the past few decades. Non-recognition results in perpetual militarized and fear-driven environments for residents of aspirant states and exacerbates the already worsening situation among some of these aspirant states.

In order to the answer the main research question, the existing literature was reviewed, which resulted in identification of six major factors that affect recognition. The first group of factors included the international law, norms, and foreign policy doctrines. The international legal aspect of recognition is debated between the constitutive and declaratory theories for

statehood. The two norms of territorial integrity and self-determination relevant to international recognition were ambiguous and in a debated status. The former emphasizes sovereignty and unchangeable borders of states, while the latter, self-determination, advocates the right of people to decide their political destiny and obliges the international community to assist such efforts. Both norms were found to have an inconsequential empirical impact on states' recognition decision. Similarly, a number of foreign policy doctrines such as the Stimson, Tabor or Woodrow Wilson, and the Estrada doctrines were found to be ineffective in setting a general principle for existing states to follow in recognition of new states. Because there is no collective procedure established yet for conferring recognition based on established legal principles, states either ignore these provisions or bend them in favor of political realities and national interests.

The second group of factors influencing recognition was national politics and interest groups. The domestic level factors, namely national politics, and the role of interest groups in relationship with international recognition, were found to be less explored and case specific. Most importantly, national politics influence foreign policy including recognition decisions when the issue at hand is not a threat to national security.

The third recurrent factor in the literature was the vulnerability proposition, alternatively called the vulnerability theory, which posits that states facing domestic secessionist movements do not risk their own security and territorial integrity by extending recognition to another aspirant state. Though a crucial factor behind recognition decisions, this variable has not been empirically tested through a cross-national analysis.

The fourth factor was the home states' role in influencing recognition decisions. Home states that stand to lose territory often lobby other countries to withhold international recognition from the aspiring state. Home states can deny independence, deploy military force, and request

the international community to respect its territorial integrity by not recognizing the breakaway region (Griffiths, 2016). Parent states do not always succeed in reversing secession or preventing international recognition of their subunits. Several separatist entities such as Northern Cyprus, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kosovo, Abkhazia, and others have survived and gained partial recognition.

The fifth factor was political regime types of the recognizer, aspirant and home states. After recognition of Kosovo by the Western democracies, several other aspirant states such as Somaliland, Abkhazia, and Palestine have tried to attract international recognition through “democratization-for-recognition strategy” (Baar et al, 2016, p.89). Some aspirant states accelerated their efforts in creating effective governments and democratic institutions, a new approach which Scharf (2003, p.374) called “strategy of earned sovereignty”. Democratic states were found to be reluctant in recognizing aspirant states breaking away from democratic states and cautious in cases of secession emerging from autocratic states. The literature review showed that there was a dearth of empirical cross-national study to determine recognition decisions by democratic states.

The last factor identified was religion. Though scholarship connecting religion and recognition decision is scarce, there is a growing literature on the important influence of culture and identity, specifically religion and ethnic ties, in international politics (Gill, 2001). Religious and ethnoreligious conflicts have a prominent international aspect. Their implications usually involve cross-border and transitional actors (Fox, 2001, p.59-66). Fox and Sandler (2010) enumerate the influence of religion in IR four ways. First, religion influences statesmen and leaders through shaping their worldviews, behavior, and thoughts. Second, religion is a key element in formation of identity. Third, religion is a source of legitimacy both at the national and

international levels. Fourth, religion is associated with international intuitions that can influence political process, for instance the Catholic Church and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation.

Assessment of the literature revealed two weaknesses or under-researched areas. First, the research on recognition of aspirant states is often case specific and limited to a select number of recognizers. Scholars have studied recognition of some single or multiple cases and focused on a limited number of recognizers, the great powers for example, and their explanations are specific to each case. Second, some variables affecting recognition are under researched. The theory of vulnerability, the identity politics, and the role of regime type in recognition decisions, when applied to all states in the international system, is ambiguous or debated.

The three variables—vulnerability proposition, regime type, religion—were placed within the relevant IR theories. Establishing a connection between the independent variables and the existing IR theories delivers two purposes. First, it serves as a guide on which to build and structure the main arguments of this thesis. Second, positioning the main arguments within the relevant theories provides an opportunity to assess which IR theory best describes recognition decision among states.

In addition to the three main independent variables, four control variables were included in order to control for alternative explanations of recognition--economic development of the recognizer states; population of the recognizer, aspirant, and the home states; official state religion; government regulation of religion.

This study employed a Large-N quantitative research design to test the set of hypotheses that were formulated based on the three independent variables. The statistical method of Logistic Regression was used due to the dichotomist outcome of the dependent variable. This study empirically examined recognition of ten polities that met the working definition of an aspirant

state: Abkhazia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Taiwan, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Somaliland, and Western Sahara. The unit of analysis was the country-level recognition. The spatial domain included all sovereign UN member states. The temporal range was the year 2011. Recognition is a changeable practice. States at various times withdraw, freeze, or suspend recognition. Though the temporal range was restricted to 2011, it included recognitions that precede 2011 and were not withdrawn or frozen by 2011. The next section provides a summary of the empirical findings and their implications.

Empirical Findings

A Large-N cross-national empirical analysis was performed to investigate the causal relationship of three main variables—vulnerability, regime type, and religion—over recognition of aspirant states. This research hypothesized that states vulnerable to domestic separatism were unlikely to extend recognition to an aspirant state. The answer to the first hypothesis was positive. The empirical evidence was statistically significant and supported the logic of the vulnerability proposition.

The empirical results are broadly in line with some previous research examining the relationship between vulnerability and recognition decision. Coggins (2014) concluded that vulnerability deterred great powers from recognizing aspirant states. This research demonstrated the logic of the proposition to be valid across all states by applying the proposition to all states irrespective of their relative power position in the international community. It predicts a general pattern for vulnerable states' behavior regarding recognition.

Findings of this thesis run counter to the position of some scholars challenging the explanatory power of the vulnerability proposition. A number of scholars argued that

vulnerability does not always deter states from supporting separatist movements abroad referring to several vulnerable countries that supported secessionist entities and even recognized aspirant states (Lewis, 2002; Laitan and Samatar, 1987; Sideman, 1997). Their criticism is perhaps valid and potentially correct. This study focused on demonstrating an aggregate and general behavior among states vulnerable to domestic separatism. There are several outlier cases where the vulnerability proposition does not hold true. These outlier cases, Colombia and Russia for example, merit in-depth case studies. Furthermore, this study only addressed recognition of aspirant states, and argued vulnerable states will not recognize aspirant states. Vulnerability potentially deters states to recognize aspirant states and does not prevent them from supporting secession movements abroad.

This thesis maintained that the vulnerability proposition reflected realism's view of the international politics—self-preservation, security, and national interest take precedent over other concerns for states. The empirical findings substantiated realism's prediction for behavior of states in international politics. This study showed that states vulnerable to separatist movements avoided granting recognition to safeguard their national security and territorial integrity.

The second and third hypotheses examined the relationship between level of democracy among states and recognition. Results of the empirical analysis demonstrated that recognition decisions were positively influenced by the level of democratic-ness of the home and aspirant states. The results showed that both free and partly free countries gravitated towards the entity that was comparatively freer and more democratic. Therefore, this study suggests the existence of a patterned behavior among democratic states regarding recognition decisions.

The empirical results provided evidence contrary to Ozpek's (2014) conclusion that regime type and democracy does not positively influence democratic recognizer's choice of recognition. However, Ozpek (2014) conclusion was limited to great powers and determined that national interest and security concerns took precedent over democratic values. This research provided further validation of previous studies that demonstrated how aspirant states engage in effective democratization to improve their chances of recognition. These findings are generally compatible and support Broers' conclusion that both home and aspirant states engage in "competitive democratization" to influence international recognition by democratic states (2005, p.71). This research also attests the generalizability of the "democratization-for-recognition strategy" (Baar et al, 2016, p.89) and the "strategy of earned sovereignty" Scharf (2003, p.374) in that aspirant states campaign for recognition by democratic states through a democratization.

This thesis argued that democratic peace theory served as the main theoretical framework in investigating the relationship between regime type and recognition. This study reaffirms the theoretical explanation of DPT in that democracies perceive other democracies as legitimate and friendly. This study confirms that democratic regimes generally favor expansion of democratic regimes (Shapiro, 2011). The results demonstrate that there is evidence for generalizability and validity of the proposed cooperative nature among democracies and the overall promotion of democratization globally which is sometimes referred to as "democratic solidarity" (Cooper and Legler, 2001; Niedererger, 2013). This research confirms that DPT's argument holds true and stands the test of time across cross-national empirical tests.

The last two hypotheses evaluated the impact of religion on recognition. Though the empirical results demonstrated both hypotheses to be positive, the results varied across different religions. While religion was an important factor influencing recognition decisions, it did not

impact every country positively. Religion constituted a major influencing factor among Islamic countries, while its impact was insignificant among Christian countries. One potential reason for the variation among Islamic and Christian countries could be that the majority of Christian countries have secular governments. Although this study proposed that even secular governments and statesmen are influenced by majority religion, this empirical study provided the opposite among Christian countries.

General Conclusion

This thesis assessed what factors motivated states to grant or withhold recognition to an aspirant state. While there are several potential factors in the literature explaining what shapes states incentives to recognize an aspirant state, this thesis focused on empirically examining three—vulnerability, regime, and religion—which were under-researched and or their impact on recognition was found to be inconclusive in the existing literature.

A Large-N cross-national empirical analysis was performed to investigate the impact of the three factors on recognition. The first factor, the vulnerability proposition, was found statistically significant and its explanatory power positive. The empirical results proved its argument that states vulnerable to domestic separatism are unlikely to recognize an aspirant state. The second factor, regime type, was found to be statistically significant. Democratic states preferred to recognize aspirant states that were comparatively more democratic than their parent states. Lastly, the third factor concerning religious affinities was found to be statistically significant with a variegated explanatory power. Religion was found to be an important factor among Islamic countries while it did not constitute a positively influencing factor for Christian countries.

This thesis contributes to the existing literature on recognition of aspirant states in two important areas. First, it attempted to fill a gap in the literature by cross-nationally and empirically studying the theory of vulnerability, religious affinities, and the role of democracy in international recognition of aspirant states. Previous studies either overlooked these variables, examined them separately, and or were often case specific. Second, an assessment of the literature shows there are few systematic works directly focusing empirically and theoretically on recognition of aspirant states where a general pattern of behavior could be drawn to systematically explain recognition by all states in the system. This thesis has attempted to fill this gap by proposing that when all other potential explanations are constant or absent, susceptibility of states to domestic separatism, regime type, and religious affinities can explain why states extend or withhold recognition to an aspirant state.

Limitations and recommendation for future research

This research presented an attempt to understand the dynamics of aspirant states' international recognition empirically and systematically. There were a number of limitations that emerged during the research process. Moreover, this study shows that there are several questions and potential avenues for future research. A discussion of the methodological and conceptual challenges and future potential avenues of inquiry is presented below.

The first limitation that resulted in exclusion of three control variables – population, official state religion, and GDP per capita – derived from the research design. The format of the research design presented recognizer states with a choice between the parent and home states to support when evaluating religious similarities and the level of democracy. After selection of cases based on the working definition, it was revealed that all the aspirant states had lower

population size and GDP per capita compared to their parent states. The lack of variation placed constraints on the empirical analysis. Therefore, the two controls were dropped while performing the statistical tests. The official state religion, another control, was excluded due to unavailability of reliable data about the aspirant states, which made it challenging to construct a reliable comparative research design similar to the population size and GDP per capita.

Rich and economically developed countries display a pro-status quo bias and are reluctant to admit new members to the club of sovereign states compared to countries classified as lower and middle-income economies (Ker-Lindsay, 2012; Maoz, 1989; Paquin, 2010). A large-N analysis weighing the relative influence of countries based on their economic development can investigate the purported relationship. The World Bank published has a new classification of world's economies based on the estimates of gross national income (GNI) per capita, which is a more realistic and accurate measurement of economic development among countries that can be used for future research (World Bank Data Team, 2018).

Another important limitation of the analysis of the relationship between recognition and religion was that this study focused on religious similarities and differences based on the majority religion in each country irrespective of denominational differences. Iran and Iraq, both majority Shiite countries, were studied as Islamic countries despite the contentious differences between the Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam. Similarly, Ireland, a majority catholic country, Georgia, a majority Orthodox Christian nation, and Kenya and the U.S. with a plurality of Protestant Christians were all labeled as Christian countries. There is potential for future research to consider these differences, especially the historical and current intra-religious schismatic factions and contentions when analyzing the causal link between religion and recognition in a more focused and nuanced manner.

There are two more potential areas for research to analyze the relationship between religion and recognition. First, analyzing the relationship between the religion of the leaders of the recognizer and aspirant states can produce fruitful insights into recognition decisions. Not all leaders adhere to the same religion or denomination as the majority population. A nuanced focus on religious views of leaders is a future potential research area. Second, investigating the relationship between religion and recognition while incorporating the level of secularization can clarify how much religion influences recognition and foreign policy decisions in general. States with secular governments, at least in theory, expectedly minimally rely on religion as a main factor when adjusting their relations with other countries and aspirant states alike.

Ethnic ties and kinship influence recognition of aspirant states. States who see the aspirant states' population "as more self-like will be deemed more deserving of recognition and external sovereignty (Coggins, 2014, p.143). Onuha (2012) argues that statesmen who share similar ethnic identity with secessionist movements in other countries have demonstrated a willingness to support the separatists' ambition for statehood. Though ethnicity is an important explanatory variable, it was not included in this study. The exclusion primarily was due to the research design and the scope of this research. This thesis studied recognition by all the UN member states. There is a lower probability of ethnic ties between the recognizer, aspirant, and home states at a global scale. Ethnicity and kinship is more applicable when studying recognition of aspirant states at a regional level as states in the vicinity of the aspirant states usually share ethnic and cultural ties.

Previous research on recognition focused on some single or multiple cases of aspirant states and often entailed recognition by a limited number of states. Coggins (2011, 2014) studied recognition of nascent states by great powers. Ozpek (2014) investigated the casual link between

competitive democratization and recognition by great powers in the international system. This research studied recognition by all the UN member states disregarding their relative power position in the global politics. As the literature reviewed showed recognition by great powers is instrumental in affecting other states' recognition decisions. As Coggins (2014) showed some states confer recognition to an aspirant state only after a great power grants recognition. Future research focusing on recognition by all states can incorporate great powers as a control variable, which can provide new insights on the impact of great powers' role in motivation of states to grant or avoid recognition to an aspirant state, especially in building a comprehensive theory of recognition.

Another key area of future research is the relationship between distance and recognition. Incorporating distance as a control variable could have added important value to this research. Distance could be a potential factor why certain states vulnerable to domestic separatism, Colombia for example, were not deterred from granting recognition to Kosovo. Distance could also explain why a large number of Islamic countries in the greater Middle East recognized Palestine, but not all of them recognized Kosovo and Western Sahrawi Arab Republic. Future research can further analyze the relationship between recognition and distance. The last potential area of research is an in-depth comparative analysis of legal and political factors behind recognition decisions. A review of the literature showed that states' recognition decisions are primarily driven by political factors. Though states often trump international law or use legal principles as camouflage to justify political incentives, a Large-N quantitative analysis could reveal the casual force of political and legal factors.

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APPENDIX A:

CODING RULES AND DATA

This appendix presents supplemental coding of independent variables that were not elaborated in detail in the research design and methodology chapter as well as the dataset used in this research. The appendix proceeds as follows. First, the coding rules for the three independent variables is presented. Second, due to the large volume of the dataset a link is provided to electronically access the dataset.

Vulnerability

This variable is binary. The expected results are dichotomous: recognition vs non-recognition. The recognizer states follow the below coding.

0 = No secession

1 = yes, no violence per year

2 = yes, 25-999 battle related deaths per year

3 = yes, min 1000 battle related deaths per year

The level and intensity of secession varies among recognizer states. However, states vulnerable to domestic separatism are coded vulnerable (1) regardless of the intensity of the secessionism. States not facing domestic separatism are coded (0). Thus, vulnerable states coded (1) are not expected to recognize an aspirant state. While invulnerable states (0) are expected to recognize an aspirant state. The direction of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable is negative. The table below summarizes the coding rules and expected results

Recognizer	Result		Relationship Direction
	Recognition	unrecognition	
0	X		Negative
1-3		X	

Regime type: the role of democracy in recognition (Democratic Solidarity)

The home, aspirant, and recognizer states are labeled as Free, Partly Free, and Not Free.

Freedom House (FH) divides all states and disputed territories into three categories based on the 1-7 scale: Free (1-2.5), Partly Free (3-5), and Not Free (5.5-7). The format of the research design presents recognizer states with a choice between the parent and home states to support when evaluating the level of democracy. The table below shows the coding rules for this variable.

Term	Code	Relationship Direction
Unlikely	0	Positive
Likely	1	
More likely	2	
Highly likely	3	

Due to the trichotomous logic of this variable the all-possible combinations of the variable and expected outcome was created as shown below.

Recognizer State	Aspirant State	Home State	Expected Result
F	F	F	2
F	F	PF	2
F	F	NF	3
F	PF	F	1
F	PF	PF	1
F	PF	NF	2
F	NF	F	0
F	NF	PF	0
F	NF	NF	0
PF	F	F	2
PF	F	PF	2
PF	F	NF	3
PF	PF	F	1
PF	PF	PF	1
PF	PF	NF	3

PF	NF	F	0
PF	NF	PF	0
PF	NF	NF	0
NF	F	F	0
NF	F	PF	0
NF	F	NF	0
NF	PF	F	0
NF	PF	PF	0
NF	PF	NF	0
NF	NF	F	0
NF	NF	PF	0
NF	NF	NF	0

Religions affinity

Like regime type the format of the research design presents recognizer states with a choice between the parent and home states to support on the basis of religious similarities or differences.

The table below shows the coding rule for this variable.

Term	Code	Relationship Direction
Unlikely	0	Positive
Likely	1	
More likely	2	
Highly likely	3	

There are seven groups of recognizer states based on the majority religion of their population. The table below shows all-possible combinations of the variable and the expected outcome.

Recognizer State	Aspirant State	Home State	Expected Result
Buddhism	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Buddhism	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	3
Buddhism	Buddhism	Christianity	3
Buddhism	Buddhism	Islam	3
Buddhism	Buddhism	Judaism	3
Buddhism	Christianity	Buddhism	0
Buddhism	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Buddhism	Christianity	Christianity	1

Buddhism	Christianity	Islam	1
Buddhism	Christianity	Judaism	1
Buddhism	Islam	Buddhism	0
Buddhism	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Buddhism	Islam	Christianity	1
Buddhism	Islam	Islam	1
Buddhism	Islam	Judaism	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Chinese Folk Religion	Buddhism	Christianity	2
Chinese Folk Religion	Buddhism	Islam	2
Chinese Folk Religion	Buddhism	Judaism	2
Chinese Folk Religion	Christianity	Buddhism	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Chinese Folk Religion	Christianity	Christianity	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Christianity	Islam	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Christianity	Judaism	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Islam	Buddhism	0
Chinese Folk Religion	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Chinese Folk Religion	Islam	Christianity	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Islam	Islam	1
Chinese Folk Religion	Islam	Judaism	1
Christianity	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Christianity	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Christianity	Buddhism	Christianity	0
Christianity	Buddhism	Islam	1
Christianity	Buddhism	Judaism	0
Christianity	Christianity	Buddhism	3
Christianity	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	3
Christianity	Christianity	Christianity	1
Christianity	Christianity	Islam	3
Christianity	Christianity	Judaism	2
Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	1
Christianity	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Christianity	Islam	Christianity	0
Christianity	Islam	Islam	1
Christianity	Islam	Judaism	0
Hinduism	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Hinduism	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	1

Hinduism	Buddhism	Christianity	2
Hinduism	Buddhism	Islam	2
Hinduism	Buddhism	Judaism	2
Hinduism	Christianity	Buddhism	1
Hinduism	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Hinduism	Christianity	Christianity	1
Hinduism	Christianity	Islam	1
Hinduism	Christianity	Judaism	1
Hinduism	Islam	Buddhism	1
Hinduism	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Hinduism	Islam	Christianity	1
Hinduism	Islam	Islam	1
Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	1
Irreligious	Buddhism	Buddhism	0
Irreligious	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Irreligious	Buddhism	Christianity	0
Irreligious	Buddhism	Islam	0
Irreligious	Buddhism	Judaism	0
Irreligious	Christianity	Buddhism	0
Irreligious	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Irreligious	Christianity	Christianity	0
Irreligious	Christianity	Islam	0
Irreligious	Christianity	Judaism	0
Irreligious	Islam	Buddhism	0
Irreligious	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	0
Irreligious	Islam	Christianity	0
Irreligious	Islam	Islam	0
Irreligious	Islam	Judaism	0
Islam	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Islam	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Islam	Buddhism	Christianity	1
Islam	Buddhism	Islam	0
Islam	Buddhism	Judaism	1
Islam	Christianity	Buddhism	1
Islam	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Islam	Christianity	Christianity	1
Islam	Christianity	Islam	0
Islam	Christianity	Judaism	1
Islam	Islam	Buddhism	3

Islam	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	3
Islam	Islam	Christianity	3
Islam	Islam	Islam	1
Islam	Islam	Judaism	1
Judaism	Buddhism	Buddhism	1
Judaism	Buddhism	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Judaism	Buddhism	Christianity	1
Judaism	Buddhism	Islam	1
Judaism	Buddhism	Judaism	0
Judaism	Christianity	Buddhism	1
Judaism	Christianity	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Judaism	Christianity	Christianity	1
Judaism	Christianity	Islam	1
Judaism	Christianity	Judaism	0
Judaism	Islam	Buddhism	1
Judaism	Islam	Chinese Folk Religion	1
Judaism	Islam	Christianity	1
Judaism	Islam	Islam	1
Judaism	Islam	Judaism	0

Government Regulation of Religion

Operationally, government regulation of religion is defined as the “restrictions placed on the practice, profession, or selection of religion” (Grim and Finke, 2007, p.636). Information for this variable comes from ARDA. Building on the definition of Grim and Finke (2007), ARDA established a database where countries are ranked on scale of 0-10, with 0 being the least regulation and 10 the most regulation. This variable is an additional control measure on the religious affinities variable.

When the home and aspirant states have the same religion that is different from the parent state, a recognizer state with higher regulation of religion is expected to recognize the aspirant state. On the contrary, when the parent and recognizer states are the same religion that is different from the aspirant state, recognition is less likely to follow when recognizer state has a

higher score of government regulation. The table below shows the coding scheme and the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Recogniz er	Aspira nt	Home State	Gov. Regulation of Religion	Expected Result	Relationship Direction
X	X	Y	0 - 2.5	1 (Less likely)	Positive
X	X	Y	2.6 - 5	2 (Likely)	
X	X	Y	5.1 - 7.5	3 (More Likely)	
X	X	Y	7.6 - 10	4 (Highly Likely)	
All others				0 (Unlikely)	
X	Y	X	0 - 2.5	1(Less likely)	Negative
X	Y	X	2.6 - 5	2(Likely)	
X	Y	X	5.1 - 7.5	3 (More Likely)	
X	Y	X	7.6 - 10	4(Highly Likely)	
All others				0 (Unlikely)	

Dataset

Due to its large size, it is impossible to include the entire dataset in this document. The link below provides electronic access to the dataset.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5ud54czwhclh9fw/AADyxidvBdFwo5_pvO8AkxPDa?dl=0